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Finding Out About
THE
ATHENIANS

by
PATRICK ANDERSON

Illustrated by
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36062



FREDERICK MULLER LIMITED
LONDON

FIRST PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1961 BY
FREDERICK MULLER LIMITED

PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LIMITED
LETCHEWORTH HERTFORDSHIRE



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*Grateful acknowledgement is made to the British Museum for
photographs of the Archaic youth and the Parthenon frieze;
all other photographs are by the author.*

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PART ONE

THE CITY ROUND A ROCK

Getting to Athens

IN ONE OF the new Comet B4s you can get to the sunny city of Athens in less than four hours, travelling much more than a thousand miles over France, Switzerland and down most of the length of Italy until you cut across the Ionian Sea to the Greek mountains.

Or, as many young people do, you can hitch-hike to Venice and then take a deck passage (sleeping-bags essential) for the voyage of three nights and two days to Piraeus, the Athenian port. Still another way is to go by train through Yugoslavia and enter Greece at its northern frontier, which will mean continuing for another twelve hours from Salonika to your destination (you'll pass Mount Olympus on the way).

Nowadays more and more people are making these journeys. Why do they do so? Not only will they find sun in Greece, and wonderful wild flowers in the spring, together with the lemon and orange groves, the vines and olives of the Mediterranean climate. Not only will they be able to enjoy some of the best bathing in the world, for the sea is tremendously clear, as well ■ being alive with fish, and if they have a mask

and flippers they can spend hours just looking—but they'll have to be careful of sea-urchins. An even greater reason is that they know that Greece, and especially Athens, laid the foundations of our modern civilisation. More than Babylon or Egypt, Carthage or imperial Rome, Hellas (as Greece is properly called) started things which still interest us today.

Suppose we think of the way we elect and organise the government in Britain. The two words we habitually use, *politics* and *democracy*, are both Greek: *polis* was the word for the city-states which shared the country between them, while democracy was the government by and for the people (or *demos*) which Athens came to favour. In fact Athens was the most perfect democracy that has ever existed—since, unlike Britain or America, which have elected parliaments, the *entire body of citizens* met together to make the laws. Or suppose that we consider the sciences that interest so many of us today: physics and astronomy. These words are Greek, too, as are atom, nucleus, hydrogen, mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, atmosphere, cosmic and so on; the Greeks had something important to say about each. And then, again, if we turn in quite a different direction, and remember that the New Testament was written in Greek, we find that the study of religion is still called theology (from *theos*, God, and *logos*, word or idea), while the study of the nature of things,

and of what is true or beautiful or good, is philosophy (*philos* friend of, *sophia* wisdom).

Although the finest period of Athenian life occurred in the Fifth and Fourth centuries before Christ, that's to say well over two thousand years ago, an ancient Greek would recognise many of the things we talk about today. He would certainly fit in very much better with our ideas and manners than people of far later date: a knight from Norman France, say, or many an Englishman from the later Middle Ages. And this would not be simply because he understood what we meant by *psychology*, *music* and *grammar*—and would get the point at once when told that we had newspapers called *Graphic* and *News* (*graphein* = to write, news comes from *nea*, new things)—but even more because he would share our free, inquiring minds.

Finally, when we add that many a grimy Town Hall, bank or university building is directly copied from a Greek temple, that our theatre had its beginnings in Greece (notice words like *scene*, *chorus*, *tragedy*) and that our ideas of art stem from the old sculptures and vase paintings, we can hardly be surprised that so many tourists prefer to take their holidays in that beautiful and sunny land. There learning and enjoyment go hand in hand, as they ought to do.

A First Walk Through the Streets

LET US SUPPOSE we have just arrived in Athens on a sparkling morning in June. Although the heat-haze has begun to dance over the brown and sulphur-coloured plain (for we mustn't expect the greenness of Britain), the mountains stand clear and hard against a very blue sky. All Greece is famous for its light; many people, indeed, have suggested that its clearness helped the Greeks to be direct and simple about everything they looked at, so that they tried to understand and analyse the perfect muscular development of an athlete's body, or the mathematical laws that govern the building of a temple if it is to appear really well proportioned, or the laws that make a city orderly and prosperous, or a man happy and good. Much of Greek life is still spent in the open air and there will be plenty to interest us as we walk through the streets.

Over there, for instance, a twelve-year-old boy with a shaved head, dark eyes and more than a suspicion of a moustache is selling lottery tickets

tacked to a long stick—but then Greeks have always loved a gamble, and it was never their way (Sokrates excepted) to despise the possession of money. A famous little poem tells us four things which a Greek wanted: health, good looks, an honestly acquired income, and friendship.

Health is the best that heaven sends,
Next to be pleasant to look upon;
Third is riches justly won,
Last to be young among one's friends.

Nearby a man is roasting corn-cobs on a charcoal brazier; another offers little pastries baked in the shape of rings and carried on a tray balanced on his head; while a third ambles round the corner with dozens of sponges bobbing about his waist like an absurd skirt—by the way, it is not unknown for sponge-fishers to come upon a wrecked shipload of classical statues, or of the wine jars called *amphorae*, that have been submerged for two thousand years in the depths of the sea.

Look at the crowd trying to get into that bus! There's no orderly queue as in England, but a violent pushing and barging, and swinging and lurching, until you'd think the dusty battered vehicle would burst at the seams—for Greeks have always been passionate individualists, the sort of people who have a great deal of fiery pride and will quarrel or go to law to prove their point; no wonder their thinkers spoke so often of *Order* and *Nothing In Excess* and the *Golden*

Mean when they had to deal with such a lively lot of folk. Or listen to the music wailing full-blast from the smart American taxi now plunging to a stop, its tyres screeching. It isn't western music, but *bousoukia*, heard thousands of years ago in Thrace and Phrygia and recently returned with the refugees from Turkey—a reminder that there was always a good deal of the oriental about the Greeks (except the Dorians); Dionysos, the god of wine and holy frenzy, came from the East, and for a long time cities like Miletus and Ephesus were richer and more influential than Athens, while Homer himself was an Ionian. A moment later, perhaps, we will pass a middle-aged workman with a flower behind his ear or a sprig of basil held between his teeth—is this superstition or vanity?—the ancient Greeks knew both.

Of course Athens is now a large modern city, the capital of Greece. It scatters the white cubes of its houses far across the plain, and one has to admit that where the suburbs used to be full of cypresses and planes, statue-lined avenues and charming gardens like that of the great thinker Plato's school, there are often bare walls painted crudely with advertisements for macaroni, petrol and soft drinks. (On the other hand, even in classical times it was the Akropolis and City Square which got most of the money for tasteful building.) What will probably strike us first of all is that there is not a single house built earlier than about 1830, and very few which are as old

as that. Unlike London or Paris or Rome there are no signs of the Gothic Middle Ages, no splendid houses or churches of the Renaissance, no villas of the elegant eighteenth century—instead there are a few tiny churches with curly tortoise roofs and patterned brickwork and, if you look very hard, one or two mosques. The reason for this is that from late Roman times to the War of Independence in 1821–8 *Athens had practically no history*. There was the long Turkish occupation, hence the mosques; while the spark of Greek tradition and language was kept alive by the Orthodox or Byzantine form of Christianity, a wonderful culture indeed, but centred on distant Constantinople.

Athens is thus very new or very, very old. It will soon become clear, however, that the modern citizens are exceedingly proud of their far-distant past. I am sure that we are all anxious to get to the Akropolis as soon as possible—well, if we start by walking up fashionable Venizelos Street, we'll soon pass three imposing buildings, the National Library, the University and the Academy of Sciences. All are copies of ancient buildings; but what is especially interesting about them is that, inside and out, their marble is brightly painted here and there in red and blue and gold. This should remind us that the ancient temples and statues were far from being the bare white objects we see today. Statues, for instance, might have jewelled eyes, bronze eyelashes, golden curls and rosy lips. The capitals of

columns, the background to friezes and the patterns on ceilings would be much livelier and gayer than the "pure" whiteness, or more likely black grime, of our British copies.

Or suppose we take the nearer route up Athenas Street to the quarter of the Plaka (a steeper place of winding alleys and little restaurants under grape-arbours) above which the Akropolis towers. This is the street of the markets. To the right you find vegetables: huge water-melons, shiny purple aubergines, peaches and many kinds of grapes. To the left there are fish and meat: purple-grey octopi (such as appear on ancient vases), baby squid which are delicious fried (these, too, were eaten in classical times), goat and mutton from herds that live much as those of the poet Theokritos did, their shepherds piping on the lonely hillsides. And everywhere are shops selling olives of all shapes and sizes: fat, wrinkled and black, green, mauve, purple—no wonder the olive appeared with Pallas Athena's symbol of the owl on the coins of ancient Athens, for it was the butter, cooking-oil, lamp-oil, soap and medicine of every household, as well as the principal export. Not only olive wreaths but also jars of oil were given as prizes in the festivals.

The point, however, is that at the top of Athenas Street you will come upon your first ruins—a wall of golden stones with broken grey columns in front—and yet this is not really a Greek ruin at all but a *Roman* one, for it is the

remains of the Emperor Hadrian's Library, while a little way over there to the left you can find the Roman Forum. We must not, in fact, forget that Athens became a Roman town, although people like Hadrian called themselves *philhellenes* because they were so fond of Greek ideas and did their best to preserve and embellish the conquered city. (Nero, on the other hand, made a thorough nuisance of himself, as we might expect; others were chiefly interested in looting any object that took their fancy.)

But already we have caught glimpses of the Akropolis itself, walled like a huge box on top of the precipitous rock, with pale white and cream and golden objects peering above it: the most famous temples in the world, and very beautiful still despite their ruin. We must climb up the steep stairs and follow the dusty path round towards the entrance, which faces the west. "There is but one entrance to the Akropolis; it admits of no other being everywhere precipitous and fortified with a strong wall," wrote that very useful traveller, Pausanias, in the second century A.D. We notice cypresses standing tall and dark against the cliff, prickly pears and a yucca or two sprouting from it; elsewhere are bushy pines. We notice exciting-looking caves and fragments of masonry. And nearby rise the smaller hills of the Areopagos (where St. Paul preached) and of the Pnyx, together with others that romp and roll towards the sea.

An Historic View

THERE IS A marvellous view from up here, and perhaps it would be best to look at it first, difficult as it is to ignore the Parthenon and the other buildings. The view existed before they did, and can tell us much about ancient Athens.

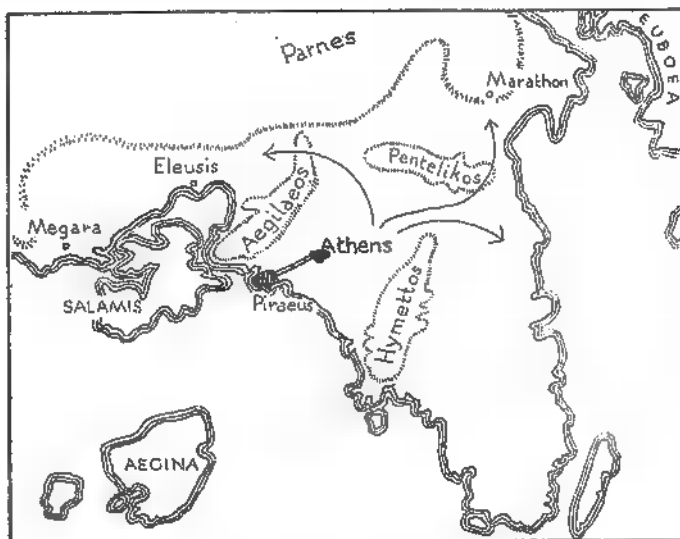
One of the reasons for the city-state was geographical. Hellas is very mountainous and has a highly indented coastline, with narrow valleys and comparatively few large plains. All this encourages the development of separate little states, like the cantons of Switzerland, each with its port and strip of coastline, its agricultural valley, hill for a fort and mountains to protect its back and flanks—and to escape to in a really serious crisis. The view shows us that Athens must have started off as a number of villages *held together by geography* and focused on a fortress hill.

As we stand with our backs to the Parthenon we look south-west towards the sea. It lies five miles away, and we can clearly distinguish the great bay of Phaliron, where the earliest Greeks drew their ships up on the beach, and then the

little peninsula of Piraeus crowned by the Munychia hill; there were three harbours there, the biggest being then, as today, beyond the ridge. It was Themistokles who realised the danger of leaving *pente-conters* (fifty-oared galleys) and the newer *triremes* (one hundred and seventy oarsmen on three tiers of benches) on the open beach (where Persians and Aeginetans could raid them) and consequently developed these harbours. Aeginetans came from the island of Aegina we see lifting its cone far out across the bay, in what is called the Argo-Saronic Gulf; they were enemies of Athens, only subdued in 457 B.C., but this enmity proved useful because it stimulated the Greeks under Themistokles to concentrate on the navy which was to make Athens so powerful. Over to our right sprawls the island of Salamis, which Athens conquered a hundred years earlier, while on the mainland opposite to it stands the town of Eleusis, also an early conquest; it was connected to the city by the Sacred Way along which processions would march for the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, a new sort of religion which was something of an improvement on the old Olympian gods. To our left (that is to say, to the south-east) the coastline soon gets very rocky; far away over there is the headland on which stands the temple of Poseidon, the sea-god who was worshipped in Athens before Athena, and past this temple the sea runs in between the island of Euboea

and the plain which stretches north-east to Marathon.

The view shows us, too, that the Akropolis rises from a plain—called the Cephisian Plain after the river, Kephisos—and that it is surrounded by four mountains: Mt. Hymettos, famous for its bees and honey but very savage and bare; Mt. Pentelikon, whose white gashes still reveal the marble quarries where Perikles got the marble for his re-building schemes after the Persian Wars; distant and very big Mt. Parnes to the north and, lower and nearer, Mt. Aigaleos, across which the Sacred Way to Eleusis runs. The plain is not particularly fertile. In fact Plato described the Athenian soil as a

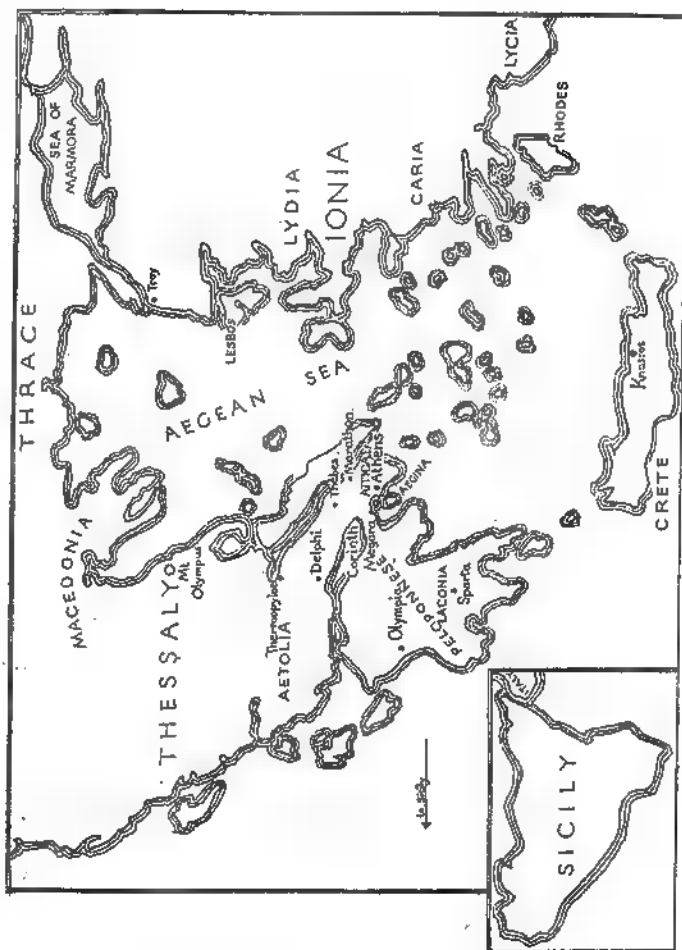


Attika: mountains and plains

starved body, with the bones of limestone showing through.

We can therefore imagine how, before recorded history began, the lords of the Akropolis and the villagers grouped in the Cephisian Plain began to push against the mountain walls that hemmed them in. Across Hymettos lay the wedge of land fronting on the Straits of Euboia, containing the important silver deposits of Lavrion and ending in Cape Sounion where the sea-god's temple was to be built; this they could reach through the valley between Hymettos and Pentelikon (where nowadays the buses take us north to Marathon, or south for ■ swim and a temple-tour at Sounion) and it is thought that they subdued it first. Next they turned north to the land about Marathon, at that time dominated by a group of four cities which they brought under their sway; but only a good deal later did they move west into the coastal fringe of Eleusis, which was still an independent power.

So much, though, was mere expansion—bringing the other fellow to heel and probably grabbing his best land. The real miracle occurred when this land of Attika was made genuinely Athenian, when a man growing olives at Marathon or catching fish on the coast beyond Hymettos no longer thought of himself as an Attic but as an Athenian, just as much as the dweller at Piraeus or in the city itself. If Athens had remained a despot over a group of subject peoples, as her great rival Sparta did in Lakonia,



or if she had been the mere head of a federation of partly independent towns and villages as was her neighbour to the north, Boetian Thebes, she could not possibly have developed in the way she

did. The Union of Attika is the first great fact in her history, so important that the Athenians said it took place under the legendary hero, Theseus, although in fact it must have been much later (during the ninth century, whereas Theseus lived before the Trojan War).

Nevertheless our view, assisted by a map, will show us that the main possibilities of growth or expansion lay by way of the sea, particularly to the east. Strong powers stood to the west; beyond Eleusis, Megara; beyond Megara, Corinth; while Sparta, which grew to prominence before Athens, was suspicious of any move towards the Peloponnese. There came a brief time, indeed, when the great Perikles extended Athenian power over both Megara and Thebes and right up to the Pass of Thermopylae, but generally speaking it was to the Aegean islands and to the coasts of Ionia that the triremes sailed. The historian Thucydides reports Perikles as saying this: "You have a great *polis*, and a great reputation: you must be worthy of them. Half the world is yours—the sea. Attika you must think of as only a small garden, surrounding a mansion." Thus the *wine-dark, many-sounding* sea, about which Homer had written, was Athens' pathway to greatness and, indeed, Poseidon was to share the Akropolis with his "conqueror", Athena.

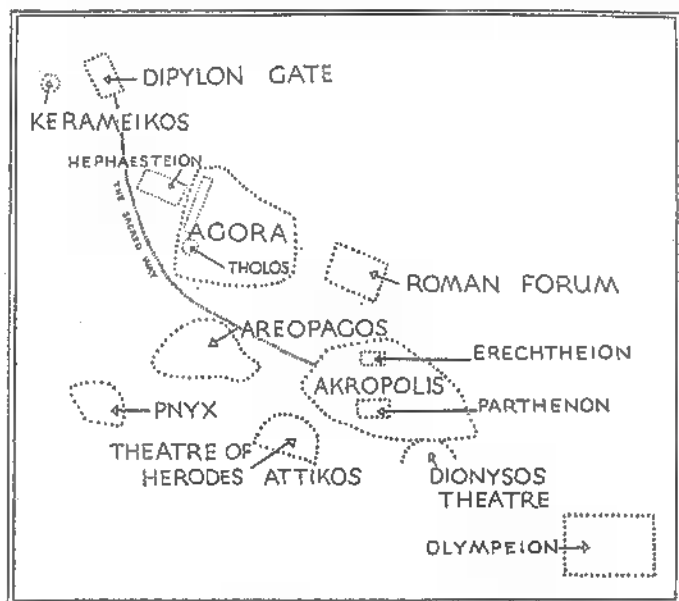
In view of all the activities of the Athenians, political and commercial as well as in the arts and sciences, it is important to remember that

their homeland was about the size of Gloucestershire—you could walk across it in two days—and that the total number of citizens (males over eighteen; for women, children, foreigners and slaves did not count) has been estimated at between thirty and forty thousand. It is surely a miracle that such a tiny country produced in such a short time so many famous men.

The Stones Beneath Our Feet

THE MYTH GOES that Athena and Poseidon had a great struggle for victory. This was, in fact, the theme of the western pediment of the Parthenon (in other words the big relief under the eaves) much of which has been unfortunately destroyed. Guides point out the holes made when Poseidon flung his trident into the temple called the Erechtheion; he made a salt spring bubble up while Athena replied with a beautiful olive tree—there is still an olive tree there, but it is far from being several thousand years old. Such things will shortly concern us, when we look at the Akropolis in detail, but at the moment it would be better to continue a little longer with our walk. We can remark in passing that the Akropolis (entrance 10 drachmas or 2s. 6d., and with a notice telling you not to sing or make loud noises, introduce animals or food, take films without permission, deface or steal . . .) contains a splendid gatehouse, the Propylaea, and three temples, the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the tiny temple of Victory, Athena Niké. It used to have much more.

From the parapets we can see all that remains of ancient Athens spread below us. On the southern side are the two theatres, so close that you could throw a stone into either: the theatre of Dionysos is where Aeschylus, Sophokles and Euripides saw their trilogies (a series of three plays) performed, with an additional comic satyr-play to conclude them, although the actual building is later; more intact, with great rounded arches soaring into the sky, is the Roman theatre of that generous philhellene, Herodes Attikos. Moving to the east, just beyond the Parthenon,



Antiquities of Athens

(On the plan the Panathenaic Way is incorrectly shown; it should run through the righthand side of the Agora).

we look down on the grandest parts of Hadrian's city, with his arch and the enormous Corinthian columns of the Temple of Olympian Zeus (or Olympeion) which was actually begun as a Doric building in the sixth century by the "tyrant" Peisistratos, of whom more later. Turning towards the north we see the jumbled modern quarter of the Plaka with other Roman buildings in its midst and then come to a wide space which looks a bit of a mess at first, as though it had been recently bombed, although there are two astonishing buildings at opposite corners: astonishing because one is very old and yet in an excellent state of preservation while the other is very large, very new and (some of us think) rather hideous. The old one is the *Hephaisteion* or Temple of the Blacksmith God; it pre-dates the Parthenon and was the working men's temple of Athens—much more recently it was the Christian church of the British Colony. The new building is a careful reproduction of the Stoa (or collonade) of Attalos; it is late Greek (Hellenistic) in style; and it was erected by American archaeologists to house their finds. For the huge lot is in fact not vacant at all but chock-full of fascinating things. It is none other than the Agora or City Square of ancient Athens, and the American school has been digging there for years. Out beyond it lies the Dipylon Gate, where some particularly old and beautiful vases were found, and the old cemetery or Kerameikos with

its store of gravestones or *steles* as they are called. Bits of the old city wall are still visible.

As we move back along the north side towards the sea we look down on the blue-white rocks of the Areopagos, the place where the aristocratic court of ex-magistrates used to preside over questions of morals and religion, and especially of murder, until their powers were limited in the interests of rule by the ordinary people. There is a deep cleft in this hill and it has been suggested that it was here that the Athenians set up a shrine to pacify the horrible Furies, who came up from Hell to avenge murdered people by sniffing out the murderer and demanding his blood. Aeschylus tells how Orestes was hounded by these creatures for killing his mother, Klytæmnestra—although he had been commanded to do so by Apollo—and how in the end a kinder law replaced that of blood for blood. The Furies were turned into Eumenides or Well-wishers through the pleasant atmosphere of Athens (even Furies would want to live there), and by this comfortable cave (which is now, alas, an informal sort of rubbish-dump and lavatory). Beyond the Aeropagos we can perhaps just catch sight of the Bema, or orator's tribune, on the Pnyx. If Perikles did not actually speak from that particular stone platform, Demosthenes certainly used it for his great speeches against the Macedonians in the fourth century.

Such, very briefly, are the larger antiquities of Athens: five temples, two theatres, with the

foundations of another later one or *odeion* (recognise the word?) in the Agora, many other foundations and bits of excavated wall or roadway, a large gate-house, a speaker's rostrum, some rocks and caves, an as yet unmentioned monument to the trainer of a boys' choir, together with a fair amount of Roman building. But, of course, to these we must add hundreds of carved inscriptions, thousands of vases and pots, tons and tons of statuary, and an enormous range of objects from terracotta children's toys and women's toilet articles to weapons, voting-machines, water-clocks, broken chariots and—of course—human bones.

This brings us back to the American school in the Agora and to the part that archæologists play in the discovery of history. Obviously we can learn something from buildings, but only after the buildings have been dug out of the ground, and their date and purpose discovered. One of the first things to remember is that the remains of the centuries generally lie in layers beneath our feet; when Schliemann went to dig for Troy he found nine cities lying in ruins one on top of the other. The Americans had to start work by pulling down about three hundred and fifty houses which had been built on the site. They had then to sift through and remove the accumulation of nearly two thousand years before they reached the ancient levels; until they struck these, they did not know where they were, and, since ancient remains had often worked

themselves up, it was necessary to go through everything with pick and shovel and a trained pair of eyes. In the course of this they removed 300,000 tons of earth and rubble from the site, finding that the classical masonry began at a depth of anything from 10 to 40 feet. No wonder that, from a distance, the Agora looks as though it had been bombed!

Notice that we speak of "levels". To find the floor of a building built in A.D. 200 may be extremely interesting, but is there another building beneath it, perhaps from the Golden Age of Perikles or from even earlier times? A complication is that the different ages of a city do not always lie in layers; one age may make use of the buildings of another, from enlarging and re-designing them to taking bits away and using them in new buildings some distance off. An example is the charming little temple of Athena Niké (Athena of Victory) on the Akropolis. It was pieced together again as long ago as 1835 from fragments of marble embedded in a Turkish wall. Luckily, archæologists do not have to work alone; they may be searching for a temple because they have read about it in the literature of the period or in the tales of earlier travellers. In Greece they have the additional good fortune that a traveller called Pausanias wrote a description of what he found standing as early as the second century after Christ; it is Pausanias who tells us that there was a picture-gallery in one of the halls of the gate-house to the

Akropolis, although not a single Greek painting now survives except in copies at Pompeii or on mummy-cases in Egypt.

The archæologist has, of course, to know much about history and literature, much also about the changing styles in a dozen different things: building, sculpture, the shaping and painting of pottery, the stamping of coins, road-making, drainage and so on. He must be able, too, to read the faintest inscriptions carved on stone and to notice whether there is any peculiarity about their lettering which may help him in giving them a date. The Americans will be eager to show us the name of the great sculptor, *Praxiteles*, only just decipherable on the base of a statue; we would never spot it for ourselves. They are equally proud of a stone which records the prices paid during an auction of the goods of the famous Alkibiades, Sokrates' brilliant but unreliable friend, after he had been disgraced and banished. You can see the list of goods (from cups and tables to horses and slaves) with on one side the number of drachmas which each lot fetched, and on the other the state tax. It tells us much about the property owned by a man of fashion, and it is likely to be just these sort of things—the practical details of people's lives—which we do not get easily from the philosophers, playwrights and poets. Plato, for instance, introduces us to a wonderful wine-party (or *Symposium*) during which Sokrates and his companions talk about love and beauty.

He tells us that Alkibiades arrived there drunk and had to lean on the flute girl (no respectable wife ever attended such parties) as he staggered forward to transfer the huge unwieldy wreath he was wearing on to the head of a friend; much later, everybody except Sokrates fell asleep. But most of the Dialogue is conversation about ideas; to get the true picture of what a wine party was like, to *see* the flute girl and the wine-cooler and the mixing-bowl (for Greeks mixed their wine with water) we must turn to the painted vases which the archæologists dig up and, if broken, patiently patch together. On one vase we can see a man reclining on his couch in a sad state indeed, so sad that a bowl has to be fetched.



The wine-cooler and the mixing-bowl

The archæologists will tell you how useful they find old wells, of which there are dozens in the neighbourhood of the Akropolis, for the ancient Athenians seem to have preferred them to spring-water. Apparently people always drop things into wells—a brooch, a comb, a knife, or the pot itself—and later, when the well ceases to be used, it becomes a dump for rubbish which piles up year by year in a compact pile that nobody is likely to loot or disturb. This rubbish helps to write history.

From time to time we will return to the archæologists to see what they have to tell us. At the moment, as we scramble about the Akropolis, we will certainly be aware of their interest in bits and pieces of stone. The surface of the hill is very uneven—slabs of naked blue-white rock—and everywhere it is dotted with marble remains, all too heavy to carry away, even supposing that your conscience or the police would let you. In this it is unlike the Agora, where so much has been found that there are places entirely covered by fragments that have been packed together for tidiness' sake; a broken nose, a couple of fingers, part of a lion's claw or the flank of a bull jostle each other and sparkle brightly in the sun. But on the Akropolis you have blocks of new marble as well, and erections of scaffolding, and workmen with chisels, because the temples are in constant need of repair.

PART TWO

FESTIVAL IN ATHENS

The Night Before

ONCE EVERY FOUR years the Akropolis was the scene of a great holiday, and attracted even more attention than usual. This was the Panathenaia in honour of Pallas Athena and of all the citizens united in the city, for *pan* means all (the god Pan got his name because all the gods on Olympos liked him so much).

Let us suppose that two young people, Tom and Jane, have somehow managed to fly back through Time to Athens during the month of the Festival, July—in many ways a much more exciting journey than taking a space-ship to that crusty old satellite, the Moon, and certainly a great deal warmer. It will be easiest to choose the year 434 B.C. for this visit of theirs: four years, that is, after the dedication of the Parthenon and three before the outbreak of the long and finally disastrous war with Sparta.

They arrive with a throbbing, a swoop and then a silvery tinkling of the air, as though something glassy had broken to let them through. Their feet touch earth which is caked and ridged and dusty, and then their eyes open to take in ■

very narrow winding street enclosed by walls of blank plaster, almost windowless. Evidently it is early evening. The white walls look chill and dusky blue. In front of them, however, is a tall wooden door and beside it a pillar with a god's head on top, which appears to give a welcoming smile. For this is Hermes of the winged feet, the god of travellers.

Tom speaks first. "Ὡς ἐν πυρεότημεν," he says, and gasps as he does so.

"Ταξειδίου γνέτου ἔχοντες," Jane answers and then, seeing Tom's face, bursts into laughter. "Good heavens, we must be speaking Greek!"

"Well, I suppose we'll have to if we're to learn anything. It's darned queer, though, isn't it? I bet we'd get good marks at school."

For a long time everything remains dreamlike and shadowy. In this shadowiness the door creaks open, and a boy of somewhere near fourteen slips through and stands before them. He has a close-cropped head of curly chestnut hair, grey eyes and a fine sun-tan. He raises his hand.

"I am Kimon, son of Onesimos of the tribe of Ajax. Welcome to my father's house. And this girl here, hiding behind the door-post, is my sister Persephone. She's afraid she'll be whipped if she comes out into the street."

"Hallo," Tom replies, moving to the doorway. "And hallo, Persephone."

"Please come in," says a surprisingly grown-up looking girl of about eleven. "Excuse me,"



"I am Kimon, son of Onesimos . . ."

she adds, "but I am not supposed to leave the women's quarters unless accompanied by a slave. Oh, I am so happy to have a girl visitor too." She holds out both hands to Jane.

Our children soon discover that Onesimos is one of the ten archons or chief magistrates who are chosen by lot every year; and although he could well be a poor man, he is in fact fairly rich, with an estate in the country and a number of house-slaves. Yet they are surprised to find his house very plain and simple and not very big, lying beside the street with an open drain down its middle and, as a result, a rather unpleasant smell. They enter by a passage with a stable for

the horses on one side (together with a light chariot) and a porter's room on the other. The inner gate leads into a courtyard (*peristylum*) which is open to the sky and has porticos on three sides. It has a pretty mosaic floor with a circle of dolphins surrounding a boat whose rigging has turned into ivy and vines that bear grapes ripe to bursting, while a lion and a bear seem the only passengers.

"Some pirates captured a young man," Kimon explains, "but the youth turned out to be the great god Dionysos himself. He was so angry that he became a lion and a bear and drove his captors into the sea, where they were transformed into dolphins."



Dionysos and the dolphins (*drinking cup, sixth century*)

Beyond the courtyard lies the living-room, where the children's mother has her loom for spinning, and beyond this are two small bedrooms (the *thalamos* and *antithalamos*). Other bed-spaces, dining-rooms (*triclinia*) and a kitchen are grouped round the porticos, one of which is a deeper recess or veranda (*exedra* is the Greek word) where you can sit out of the summer heat. The Greeks have never shared our love of privacy, and Tom and Jane find that people sleep all over the place (the slaves, say, on the kitchen floor), except that the women, who are confined to the house and even locked in, have quarters of their own. Athenian men spend so much time in the porticos of the Agora, or out in the open air, that they are not especially interested in their houses.

Nevertheless this plain house contains some beautiful things. There are small statues of the family's favourite gods against one wall of the courtyard, together with a simple altar to Zeus. Here the family prayers are said, *lustrations* (ceremonies of purification) performed and *libations* (gifts of wine) poured. The statues are also garlanded and anointed with oil. Kimon says that next to the wise and brave Athena, who can fight like a man, he prefers the messenger-god Hermes, because he can move like lightning—Kimon is very keen on running and hopes one day to go all the way to Olympia and join in the famous games. Besides, Kimon would like to travel too, and go across the sea to Ionia and

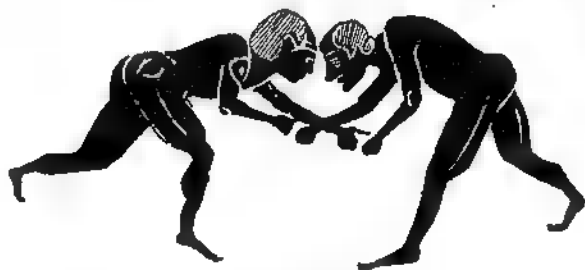
even up to the Dardanelles where the Trojans used to live; he learns at school to recite Homer's stories about the fight between Hektor and Achilles and the funeral games that took place when Achilles' friend, Patroklos, was killed. But his sister Persephone says that her favourite is Artemis. Although she is a woman, Artemis has so much fun living in the forest and hunting wild bear and stags and wolves; she doesn't care about having a husband and a house to look after, and she never has to weave or sew!



"... chairs, which the women sit on..."

As Tom and Jane are shown around, they see that there is not a great deal of furniture, but that what there is seems simple and pleasantly designed. There are square straight-backed wooden chairs, which the women sit on to eat—unlike the men, who use couches—and perhaps there are two or three seats of honour or thrones (*thronos*) with their foot-stools. Such chairs are gaily decorated; the posts forming the back

may be in the form of the graceful necks and heads of swans, or the arms have lions' heads at their ends while the feet are lions' claws grasping balls (ball and claw feet were known in ancient Egypt and you often come across hints of Egypt in the Greece of that time). Even grander are some of the couches, used both for dining and sleeping, although their "springs" are just leather thongs or a network of cords and our visitors will not find them very comfortable. The tough wooden frames of the best ones are decorated with bronze. Under them slip the three-legged tables on which the men take their food, each having a little table to himself. In the living-room and the dining-room there is a rug brought by traders from Persia while other bright objects are the various vases and pots. "We don't bother much about the patterns on our china," Jane thinks to herself, "but these Greeks can enjoy the stories and scenes painted on their cups and bowls as though they were picture-books: here is the hero Herakles taking the world from Atlas and holding it up, he is so



Boys wrestling

strong—here are boys wrestling, and here slaves climbing into olive-trees to knock down the fruit!”

The young people are introduced to Onesimos, a dark-bearded man with an air of unquestioned authority, and to Hestia his wife. For some time they watch Hestia supervising her maid at the loom—it would be impolite, Kimon whispers, for children to sit in front of their parents until told to do so. The maid is weaving a length of Egyptian flax into a *kiton* (dress or tunic-dress) for Persephone; the material has already been home-dyed a popular shade of red, and the maid is cleverly working in a border of blue waves—wave-patterns or the Greek Key still popular today can be woven with the fabric rather than embroidered or painted on it. Meanwhile, Mother embroiders a more difficult design—a “palmette”, based on the honeysuckle—to do justice to a piece of silk from the island of Chios. Silk is rarer than linen or muslin, she explains, and this is a real bargain too. It will do for a head and shoulder scarf at the feast tomorrow, if only she can get it finished in time.

There is to be no men’s dinner-party tonight, and Kimon’s family have already eaten, so the visitors are given some barley soup and some bread flavoured with garlic and then everyone goes to bed. There are no strong lights anywhere, just little lamps of bronze or pottery with a wick floating in the oil. Persephone takes Jane upstairs to the women’s quarters and for quite a time there

is giggling as she shows her collection of brooches and her mirror in its frame of cupids peeping out of vine-leaves, and opens the wicker-basket in which she keeps her other treasures: she has terracotta toys and an ivory box for jewellery, and a lot of beads and fillets to keep the braids in her hair and swing it back in a pony tail, and she has belts and girdles for the draping of her pleated dresses.

Jane can't for the life of her understand how a young girl can turn such a simple thing as a *kiton*—just a length of material gathered by clasps at the shoulders and with an open slit all down one side—into a complicated series of pouches, zig-zags and folds. When she tries the *kiton* on, it falls flat to the ground and seems far too long and wide. Persephone shows her how to get over the wideness by gathering it over the chest with a pretty cord which runs under the arm-pits and ties between the shoulder-blades. "Mother or the slave-girl has to do it for me," she confesses. Then she pulls up the slack at Jane's feet and drapes it in a bulge (or *kolpos*) over a girdle round the English girl's waist, arranging it so that it forms a lot of little pleats and really looks as though it were an extra bodice. "You can have two if you like," she adds, fetching another girdle. "One below the other—over the hips."

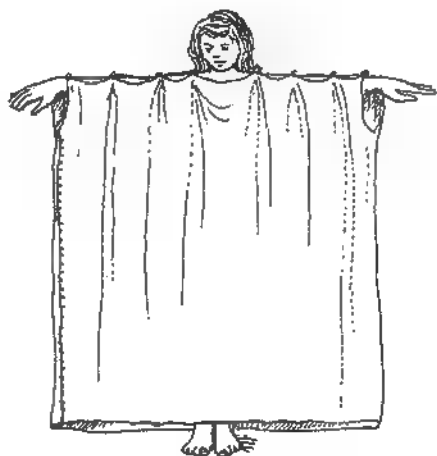
"I don't think I will," Jane says, still very surprised to find she can speak Greek. She thinks the *kiton*, which is of muslin, dreadfully



Hestia at her embroidery

thin and transparent, and she decides that the slit would make one very cold if the wind blew. But Persephone shows her other kitons where the slit is sewn up.

"Since you come from the place of the North Wind," she goes on, "I thought you'd be rather like our Dorian Greeks who live in Sparta and thereabouts. They wear woollen kitons which are rougher than ours and have a funny flap or over-fold in front instead of pouches. But, all the same, they don't mind the cold—even the girls do sports there without any clothes on, like the boys. Dorians come from the North, not like us Ionians. We've been here always."



How to wear the kiton

And then she tells Jane the story of how once an army had been defeated so badly that only one man survived. When this man came home

and told the anxious womenfolk that he was the only survivor they were so angry with him that they pulled the fish-bone and bronze pins out of their Dorian kitons and scratched him to death. "After that, we gave up that kind of dress as dangerous. See, *our* kitons have clasps."

Both our visitors soon find that Kimon and Persephone constantly explain things by telling stories of gods and heroes and ancient battles, most of which come from Homer or another old poet called Hesiod. They seem to know a lot about history, and to be very proud of the doings of the Greeks—but Tom and Jane can't help wondering whether all the history is really *true*. Surely it can't be correct that Kimon and Persephone are actually descended from gods? And another thing they notice is that all the Athenians are proud of being Ionians and not Dorians, and having lived in Attika since the beginning of time. Sparta seems pretty unpopular. "Battles are very fine, but you don't want to be in the army *all* the time," Kimon says. "Why, they make the boys live away from their parents in herds, and they have prefects and professional floggers to keep them in order!"

Yet Tom and Jane feel that there is something rather splendid in the way these Athenians remember the past. Schoolchildren in Britain do not hero-worship Nelson or Drake or Henry the Fifth nearly as much as Kimon and Persephone admire Themistokles or Solon, the law-giver, or Harmodios and Aristogeiton who

are supposed to have driven out a wicked tyrant—and, as for legends, Herakles and Theseus are real live people to the Athenian children, while King Arthur and even Hereward the Wake remain dim and vague to their English counterparts. “Just suppose we recited Shakespeare as Kimon can Homer. Pages and pages!” is to be one of Tom’s frequent reflections. “Everyone would think us geniuses, I’m sure.”

Meanwhile Tom has gone off with Kimon to a bedroom off the portico. The tutor-slave (*paidagogos*) goes with them; he is a kindly elderly man called Demeas, and more of a friend than a slave—in fact Kimon says that he’s very clever and a great help with schoolwork, although he’s a bit too strict. He was captured in Sicily, where the Greeks have set up colonies. Maybe he’ll buy his freedom one day, for he makes a little money copying verses for the schoolmasters, or perhaps Onesimos will free him when Kimon’s older.

Tom and Kimon take off their clothes and spread *himations* or big cloaks over them. Kimon tells Tom they will have a lot of adventures tomorrow, and watch the sacrificial beasts being slaughtered, and maybe see the great *strategos* (general), Perikles himself . . . and he must show Tom how to catch a cicada so that you can make it sing against your ear, or a green flying-beetle round which you can attach a piece of thread so that it zooms in circles about you.

Before Tom falls asleep, he hears the horses

moving in the stable and a cricket chirping by the charcoal hearth, and then the extraordinary noise—like a rusty hinge being forced—of a donkey's bray. The night is still hot. The sounds get mixed up with the smell of charcoal, and the olive oil Kimon rubs on his skin, and the garlic they had for dinner, and horses and resinated wine and the wool of the big cloak. And because Athens is full to bursting with countrymen and visitors, there is a vague confused murmur which rises and falls like the waves of the sea.

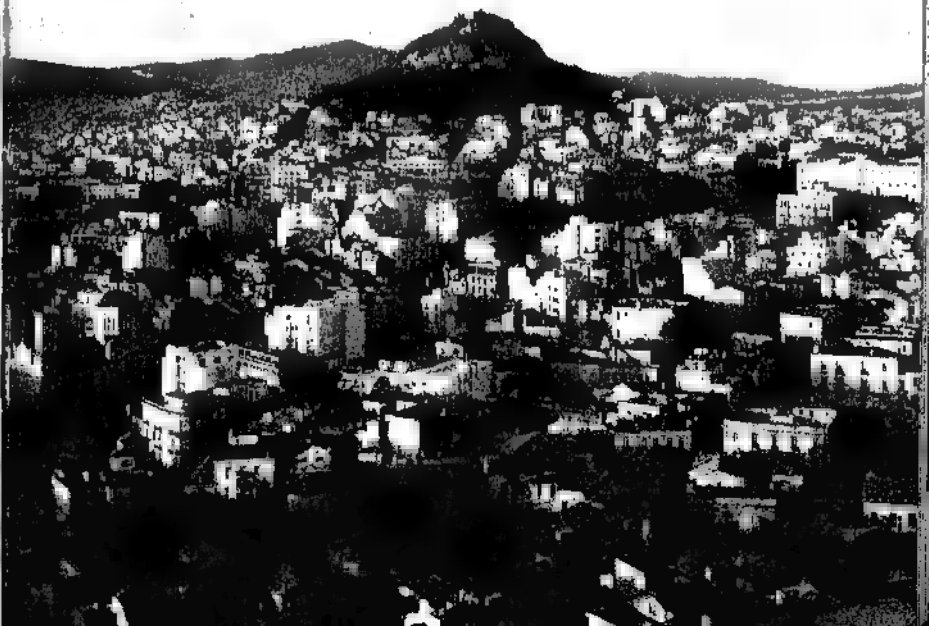
The Big Parade

THE HOUSEHOLD RISES before dawn, but even then the cocks have been crowing for some time. When the boys wake up they find old Demeas in the courtyard, supervising a younger slave who is drawing water from the well. This water is poured from a big jar into a couple of water pitchers (*hydria*) and these are taken into a bare room just off the portico, which has a drain in the floor and a ledge containing oil jars (*lekythoi*) and skin-scrapers or *strigils*. Kimon has kept his himation wrapped around his waist, but now he throws it off and the tutor pours the water over him, after which the young slave rubs him briskly with a towel. Since he is not going to the gym or *palaestra* today, he doesn't bother with the oil. Then Tom has his "shower". Unused to being waited on by a slave, he wants to towel himself; the young man, a dark-skinned native of the Nile Valley, grins and bows.

Kimon tells Tom that he cannot go to the festival in the *barbarian* clothes he wore last night, for Tom has slipped back into the fifth century B.C. in a pullover and jeans, and the



(Above, left) Hadrian in the Agora. (Right) Boys in Greek national dress; (Below) Modern Athens and Mt. Lykabettos.





(Left) Scouts by the Erechtheion and the Sacred Olive.

(Below) At the football table.





Inside the Parthenon (the east or entrance end).



A fallen Corinthian column of the Olympieion.

Greeks regard trousers as fit only for Persians and other foreigners whose language sounds like nothing on earth except ba-ba-ba. The women, by the way, were secretly even more scornful of poor Jane, who happened to arrive amongst them in a thick chocolate-brown school blazer over a rather shapeless woollen dress—they thought such clothes must mean that she had some deformity to hide and even suggested that it was better to follow their own custom and expose a sickly child at birth! Now Kimon offers Tom a short kiton, which comes to half-way down the thigh and does not have any pouches, and also a *chlamys*, a short cloak fastened on the shoulder. Both boys put on sandals. Tom is surprised at the care Kimon takes over his appearance, with the paidagogos advising, helping and inspecting the results; although only fourteen he is a well-built boy, and he is clearly anxious that his kiton should hang well and reveal the lines of his muscular body, while he loves to swing his cloak in a swaggering way. Finally, however, the tutor stops this showing off, for it is now necessary, the bath over, to say good-morning to the gods.

They go back into the courtyard and Kimon and his tutor stand in front of the row of gods, raising one hand with the palm upward and praying in clear voices to Zeus and Athena (whose day it is) and Kimon's favourite Hermes. They would think it unmanly to kneel. Then the tutor whispers to Kimon not to forget his poor

grandfather, who died last year of the plague, whereupon the boy stretches both arms towards the ground and stamps with his foot to attract the attention of the powers of the underworld, especially Hades, their chief, and Minos, Rhadamanthos and Aiakos, the judges of where the dead person should go in that generally shadowy world. "May my poor grandfather, Aristides the son of Hippokleides—you must know of him, the old chap with the broken nose who fitted out a trireme against Aegina—he used to be a great long-jumper, too, in his younger days—may poor Aristides not be left to wander about the dark fields of asphodel, but find a home in Elysium, the islands of the Blest!"

After breakfast—which Tom tries to be polite about, for it consists not of ham and eggs but of some bread and olives and a lump of soggy salty sheep's cheese—the boys meet Jane and Persephone, who have eaten upstairs.

"Good lord," exclaims Tom, "what on earth has happened to you?" For his sister is wearing a kiton of blue linen with a red egg-and-dart border over which she has thrown a big cloak embroidered with elaborate bands of birds and dolphins. Persephone and the slave girls have entirely altered her hair. She has ringlets in front and braiding on top, and if it had been longer, she would have had something equally elaborate behind.

The archon has already left for the Dipylon Gate to help muster the procession, while his

wife will attend the ceremony in the company of other important ladies. It has therefore been arranged that the children shall be taken on ahead by Demeas and a female slave called Phyllis. Luckily the archon has influence with the priests of Athena. They are to be allowed to stand on the ledge that runs round the little temple of Athene Niké, projecting from the Propylaia itself and with a fine view of the Panathenaic Way.

It is getting light as they troop out into the street, and Kimon, seeing the flush of pink above Lykabettos, quotes Homer's famous phrase about "rosy-fingered dawn" but his tutor urges him to recall some lines concerning Athena herself, since to her all honour is due.

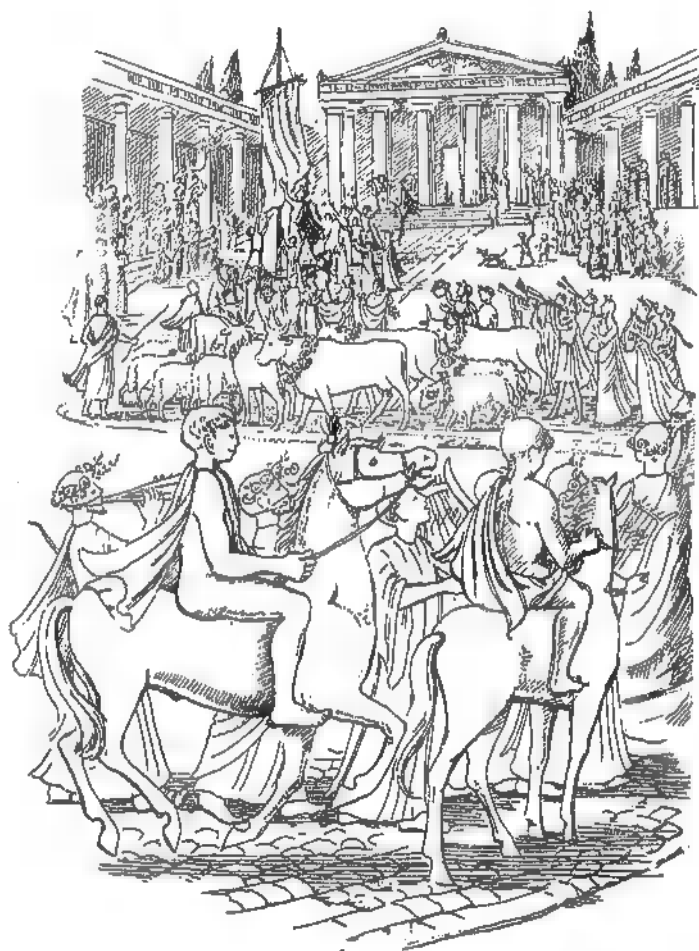
"How about the bit on our own city when the Achaians are gathering their hosts against Troy? Homer only mentions Athens a couple of times although bright-eyed Athena plays such a big part in the story."

"Very good, my son," says the tutor.

Kimon pauses and then sings out in a voice that is just on the point of breaking: "*And they that kept the fine fortress of Athena, the realm of light-hearted Erechtheus, whom Athena daughter of Zeus cared for when grain-giving Earth had brought him to birth, and gave him an Athenian resting-place in her own rich sanctuary; where year by year he worshipped with bulls and rams—they, the Athenians, were led by Menestheus*

son of Pateus. And with him followed fifty black ships."

The narrow twisting streets are crowded with people pouring in from the country—on foot, on donkeys and mules, in carts and chariots. Most of them wave branches of olive in their hands, and some have stuck sprigs in their caps or behind their ears. Peasant families (but, remember these peasants are equal citizens with Perikles and the other *strategoi* and archons) have brought picnics with them, although they all hope to get a share of the roast meat from the sacrifices. Richer men ride in from the suburb of Kolonos or from their estates. Sailors from the Piraeus mingle with leather-merchants, cobblers, potters, blacksmiths and traders in cloth and wine. *Metics* (foreigners) are there in plenty: Jews and Egyptians, northerners from Scythia and Thrace, Persians, Phœnicians and even a few Indians, perhaps. Bands of Scythian archers act as police. When Tom and Jane reach the Panathenaic Way (part of which has been dug out by modern archæologists) they catch a flash of armour in the square, the rumble of the massing chariots, the friendly or jeering shout ■ a member of the Council of the Five Hundred goes into the Bouleterion (the Town Hall) to join his fellows before they set off for the mustering point. Kimon points out a group of his schoolfellows who are going to take part in the games which will follow the religious ceremony (he can't, he explains, because yesterday he trod



The Panathenaic procession

on a prickly pear and got its thorns in his foot), and little Persephone shows Jane a tall, pale youth, dressed in spotless white, who made his name last year at the Dionysia, playing women's parts on the stage. Amongst the crowds come many Greeks from the islands Athens has recently turned into an empire, from Delos, the birthplace of Apollo, or Paros, or Skyros, where the giant bones of Theseus were discovered and brought back to Athens.

Slowly the children make their way up the zig-zag ramp between the wings of the still unfinished Propylaea, perhaps the building most admired by the Athenians because of the difficulty of erecting it on the steep slope with its wings projecting on man-made bastions. Turning to the right they reach the Temple of Athena Niké, begun in 450 but not finished until fourteen years after our visit—in fact their vantage point is at an odd mix-up of architectural planning, for the tiny unfinished temple prevented the Propylaea being extended on this side and it was never fully completed. Here they sit down and swing their legs above the forty-foot drop.

Now, amongst ■ great clamour, the procession approaches. First come the priests and priestesses, garlanded with flowers and crowned with gold. They bear with them the mast of a ship carried on wheels, and on this flashes the crocus-yellow *peplos* (a sort of *kiton*) which is the principal object of the procession, for it will be

draped on the statue of Athena Polias, the most sacred of all her statues although it is old and made of wood. Just below where the children sit the "ship" is "moored" and the peplos is taken down and carried. Following behind are the Athenian girls lucky enough to have been chosen to weave it and to embroider it with scenes of warfare between gods and giants, such as appear also on some of the bas-reliefs of Athena's temple, and on the shield she often carries—for did she not destroy the powerful Persians, the giants of their day? Some carry incense-burners, others bowls for the libation, still others spits for roasting. Then, with a gentle lowing and bleating, and a clatter of hoofs on the stones, the oxen and sheep pass by, the animals and their attendants both covered with flowers. Musicians are there, too: players on the flute (which was really more like our clarinet) and on a development of the Homeric lyre called the *kithara* (Hermes is supposed to have invented the lyre by using the shell of a tortoise wrapped in ox-hide as a sounding-box, from which two wooden horns projected with a bar at the top to carry the seven thongs). Persephone claps her hands to the music, which uses the Dorian or Phrygian harmonies, since Ionian and Lydian are considered too soft and lulling for a great public occasion. But Kimon tugs Tom's arm.

"Look," he says, "none of the beasts is struggling or turning aside. This is a good omen.

Perhaps those sour-faced Spartans won't trouble us after all. In any case bright-eyed Athena can smash them to smithereens if she wants to!"

The musicians come at the head of the warriors. There is a terrific rumbling and rattling from the chariots, and sometimes a horse plunges and almost falls. Jane is pleased to see them so beautifully groomed. Then come the heavy infantry, the hoplites, of whom the Athenian army possesses ten thousand. Tom is very impressed by these compactly built, stern-looking men, with their black beards, brown muscular arms and thighs, and huge crested bronze helmets which flash in the sun. They wear close-fitting breast-plates, short pleated kilts and their calves and shins are protected by greaves. Kimon explains that their round shield is called an *aspis*, and points out how they carry both a six-foot spear (*doru*) and a sword (*xiphos*).

"When I'm eighteen I shall do two years military service," he goes on. "I shall join the *epheboi*, the regiment of youths, and have a year in barracks training and then another on the frontier. And I shall have to swear a great oath."

"Oh, do tell us what it is," the children eagerly ask him.

"Well, I don't remember it all," he replies with a laugh that Demeas instantly reproves for such things should be taken seriously by young boys—"but it is very grand and noble. It starts off like this. *I will not disgrace my sacred weapons*

or desert the comrade at my side. I will hand on my fatherland greater and better than I found it. . . ."

"You have left a bit out," the paidagogos exclaims. "*I will fight for things holy and things profane, whether I am alone or with others. I will hearken to the magistrates. . . .*"

But at this moment they are all distracted by the arrival of the knights. The hoplites marched in column, but the knights prance by, their short cloaks fluttering and their kitons often unloosened from the right shoulder and breast and scarcely touching their thighs; they are a lively crew, the flower of Athenian youth, and that very young knight over there—surely he can't be more than sixteen?—is none other than Alkibiades, the future general. Already he is the pupil and friend of Sokrates.

"And there's Squill-head!" Kimon shouts, pointing to a dignified but clever-looking gentleman who has dismounted from his charger and strides behind the squad of knights, occasionally acknowledging the people but spending much of the time deep in conversation with various companions, whom Kimon thinks must be architects and sculptors, perhaps Pheidias himself, the Surveyor General and Artist-in-chief, because Squill-head Perikles (so-called from his long skull) is always thinking of improvements to his beloved Akropolis.

Suddenly a foreign-looking man breaks through the onlookers, darts up to Perikles and

violently tugs his cloak. Angry words are shouted. Demeas and the children listen with concern as two Scythian police approach the interrupter only to be motioned back by a gravely frowning Perikles.

"Ah, it's a fellow from the islands," Demeas finally explains. "A Melitean. He bitterly resents the fact that *his* money, as he calls it, contributed for the defeat of the Persians, is now being used to beautify Athens, just because she has declared herself head of the Delian League. Delos is an island far out there in the Aegean Sea—a sanctuary of the Ionians, where the treasury used to be before it was moved here. See how angry the Melitean is!"

"You're nothing but thieves!" the man is shouting. "You have turned the Sacred Treasure into a fund for public display . . ."

"For beauty and the glory of the gods," someone answers him. "Why buy arms when there is no longer a need?"

"And also for all Hellas—for the pan-hellenic ideal," another declares in ringing tones. "Are not we Athenians building a splendid treasure house at Delphi to do honour to Apollo and to all Greece, for Delphi is the heritage of all the states?"

But the man is not satisfied. "Bah!" he sneers, "you call your imperialism and self-seeking a pan-hellenic crusade. Tell that to Sparta—or Corinth. They will laugh in your faces."

What Perikles says to calm the man down is too soft to be overheard.

"Perikles can handle *him*," Kimon whispers. "He's used to hecklers in the Assembly. Why, I don't know how many times he's been elected a general—it must be dozens and dozens!" (Actually, it was thirty times in all.) "But then he comes from a famous family, the Alkmaeonids, and his great-uncle was Kleisthenes the reformer."

"The first of Athenians," Demeas adds gravely, "and one who has turned Athens into the school of Greece! But it was not his family who helped him so much as his teachers—the great Zeno of Elea who said that there is only one god, who started everything moving by the force of his mind; and the great Anaxagoras, also, who believed in intelligence above everything. Intelligent teachers lead to a pupil with *nous*; do they not, Kimon, my boy?"

As for Persephone, she doubtless chatters gaily to Jane but it is difficult to overhear her; Athenian girls were *supposed* to be rarely seen and never heard, although one can't help wondering how successful their elders were in keeping them quiet.

Now the procession sweeps up through the great gate, followed by a mass of people under the supervision of marshals, and the children slip round to join it. If their visit had been thirty years later they would have found all the buildings on the Akropolis finished, but they would also have arrived at the end of ■

great war, with Athens terribly defeated and Perikles long since dead. In any case, we cannot be quite sure of all that happened on this fabulous hill, for there are many points which scholars still dispute and we must remember that, although it is bare and simple today, it was once crowded with shrines, terraces, colonnades and sculpture. (During his visit Pausanias describes a host of things which were still standing.) But we can be certain that Tom and Jane would be first struck by the huge bronze statue of an armed Athena, carrying a spear, which welcomed sailors far out in the bay for it was almost fifty feet tall. After watching over Athens for nearly a thousand years this Athena Promachos was taken to Constantinople, where it stood for seven hundred more, until it was overthrown in a riot in 1204 and subsequently melted down into coins by the Crusaders. However it was far from being the only statue of Athena in the precincts. Inside the Parthenon, which we should perhaps call the New Temple of Athena Polias (Goddess of the City), for the actual *parthenon* or hall of the maidens was only a part of it, there stood another figure by the same sculptor, Pheidias. This was made so richly of ivory and gold that one scholar has estimated its materials alone worth more than £150,000. It soared thirty-nine feet into the air of the dark *cella* in which it stood, surrounded by a two-storied colonnade, and with a shallow pool of water in front of it. Behind, in the other

two chambers of the temple, great piles of treasure were stored, for the Temple was also a sort of bank. In a crisis the gold and jewels could be used for the defence of the polis.

This "parthenon" will certainly be the most glorious sight the children see as they follow the crowd along the base of its northern flank, looking up between the seventeen huge columns to catch glimpses of the *frieze* high up around the inner wall, a frieze which pictures the very festival in which they are taking part, since the Athenians were the first Greeks to put not only gods and heroes but also themselves as a decoration to their national temple—and naturally they chose to be looking at their best, as now during the Panatheneia.

Kimon points out that as well as the frieze around the inner wall there are numerous tablets carved in higher relief above the columns. These are called *metopes*, and represent various battles: between gods and giants on the east side, Greeks and Amazons on the west, and Lapiths (Thessalian mountaineers) and Centaurs on the south. The eastern pediment shows the birth of Athena, as we have seen, while the western one depicts the struggle between the goddess and Poseidon. (Tom recalls that he has been taken to the British Museum and shown some of the southern metopes and the frieze as well as bits of the eastern pediment, for these form part of the collection known as the Elgin Marbles, but he decides to keep quiet

about this, for fear of annoying his Greek friends.)

"How lovely and white the marble crystals look!" Jane can't avoid exclaiming.

"Yes, but in the centuries to come they will doubtless weather into cream and honey-colour and even a blush of red, for there is much iron in the Pentelic rock," Demeas answers her. "And do you realise what a masterpiece of mathematics this temple is? Iktinos and Kallikrates have made it look so firm, and the columns so straight, by all sorts of clever calculations: if the base, for instance, *were* absolutely level it would appear to sag, and so they have made it curve up towards the centre by a few inches only. And as for those fine strong columns, they actually taper, bulge in the middle and tilt inwards."

"Yes," Kimon adds. "I've heard that if you continued the line of the columns up into the sky you'd get a sort of pyramid—I mean they'd all meet about a mile and a half up!"

"A fit shrine, indeed, for the goddess of wisdom . . ." Demeas exclaims.

But it is not upon the grand armed statue within that the peplos is to be draped, but rather on yet another one, which is called the *cult statue*, an object so magical that many people think it really *is* Athena. Years before, when the Persians seized the Akropolis, the Athenians took it away with them to Salamis; before that it used to live in a temple now ruined,

and probably pulled down, which lay alongside the brand-new "Parthenon". It is made of olive-wood and shows a more peaceful seated goddess. Once a year certain girls take off its ornaments and clean it, and there is even a story that it is carried down to the Piraeus and washed in the sea, returning by torchlight. It belongs to the especially holy place on the north of the rock, where the Erechtheion is soon to be built; this is the area sacred to Poseidon, too, and Erechtheus, and Kekrops the supposed ancestor of all Athenians; it contains the olive tree and the salt-spring and round it crawls the holy snake.

Near the eastern, entrance end of the Parthenon the procession has come to a standstill, for there, in the open air, stands the Great Altar. There are to be two sacrifices, as well as the gift of the peplos, and Tom and Jane don't very much want to look at them. A large *hecatomb* of cattle will be sacrificed here at the altar, the paidogogos explains, with one of the most beautiful beasts being chosen as a special offering to Athena Niké. The roast meat will then be distributed to the people. But a smaller sacrifice will be made elsewhere to Athena Hygeia (Athena as the goddess of health) and to the "old temple", which in our year of 434 B.C. may have been some temporary building on the sacred northern ground—this meat will be for archons and other state officials.

"Father will get some and give it to us," Persephone says.

But Jane says she couldn't possibly stomach it, not after having seen all those nice, gentle animals.

"We're used to sacrifices," Kimon laughs. "You should read the ones in Homer. Those old Achaians loved a feast and a party. I bet I can remember one—they're all much the same." Once again Kimon turns to the stories he learns in school. *"Now when they had prayed and sprinkled the barley meal, first they drew back the victims' heads and slaughtered them and flayed them, and cut slices from the thighs and wrapped them in fat, making a double fold, and laid raw collops thereon, and the old man burnt them on cleft wood and made libation over them*



"... slaves climbing trees to knock down fruit..." (sixth century amphora)

of gleaming wine; at his side the young men in their hands held five-pronged forks . . ."

"They do sound greedy," Tom says. "Nowadays you Athenians don't seem to eat very much meat at all."

"We're more civilised," Kimon laughs, "and anyway, we're not heroes."

The sacrifices over, the children go off to watch the games and competitions in music and poetry in the Stadium below the Akropolis and beyond the little Illysos river. There for the moment we will have to leave them. At least, we will have to talk about things they cannot know fully at this time, because the Athenians themselves do not know them, but which Tom and Jane will learn when they get back to England and a good library.

Who was Athena?

THIS PANATHENAIC FESTIVAL is one proof of the tremendous love Athenians had for their city, and of the way Athena Polias stood in their minds for all that was finest in city life.

Why was Athena their goddess? Tom and Jane have plenty of questions like this to ask Kimon and Persephone, and do in fact ask them, but the whole story is only to be discovered later. How long had she been worshipped on the Akropolis, and what was the origin and early history of the Athenian Greeks? Such questions probe far into the past, and are not easily dealt with. The honest historian has often to confess that he just does not know, but that he hopes one day to find out.

In the early religions of peoples we frequently discover that one set of beliefs is taken over, and absorbed, by a later one. Primitive folk are much concerned with nature and, in particular, with the return of spring and the growth of the crops. For this reason they worship "Mother Earth", and think of the forces of the universe as chiefly female, since it is the Earth and not, say, the Sun which actually grows the barley and

maize and corn, and it is the mother who has the babies. They invent *fertility* dances and songs to encourage the crops, and recite each other stories such as that of the goddess Persephone who spends part of the year underground, in Hades, but who returns to earth with the buds and the flowers.

It seems that the earliest culture in Greece (sometimes called the *Aegean* or *Pelasgian* culture) was of this sort, and that when the peoples we know as Greeks entered the country from the north (in waves of invasion from about 1500 B.C.) they brought with them a different religion based on gods rather than goddesses; these gods were people rather like extreme examples of their own heroic, warring, wild-living selves—they were not agricultural fertility powers at all. What is interesting is that they seem to have absorbed the fertility goddesses by *marrying them*. When Zeus the Thunderer, chief of the Olympian gods, married Hera, he was really absorbing the older faith of the Pelasgians, which still of course continued, especially in village festivals and rites. When Apollo, often thought of as the god of reason and disciplined thinking and living, set himself up in the mountainous chasm of Delphi, he is supposed to have slain the Pythoness Goddess who originally ruled there; but, in fact, the spirit of this snake goddess lived on in the famous oracle which was always delivered by a woman—and not a woman in her senses, either,

but in a trance, and mumbling weird nonsense words which had to be "translated" into Greek verse by an attendant priest.

As civilisation grew, the Greeks, and especially the Athenians, found this mixture of religions rather embarrassing. Their gods and goddesses had an awesome amount of power, of course, but their behaviour towards humans was often spiteful, cruel, and contradictory. Was it right, for instance, that boys learning Homer in school should read nothing nobler and purer than these things?

It was Athens, the "School of Greece", which provided several solutions to the problem. One was the growing popularity of the Mysteries at nearby Eleusis. Since these really *were* mysteries we do not know a great deal about them, but it seems that the older fertility worship—connected with Demeter, Persephone and the God of the Dead—was given a new form, and that at Eleusis the worshippers had a real feeling of a god or gods being near, and that they experienced a new, happier idea of a life after death.

Another solution was that of the Panathenaic Festival, in which the old olive-wood Athena Polias, a peaceful seated goddess of the farm and field, was combined with the Warrior-Virgin who sprang fully armed from Zeus' forehead when Hephaistos tapped it with his hammer, and who could represent for Golden Age Athenians the glory of their expanding city and

its democratic ideas. And there is an interesting point here; of all Greek city-states, only Argos and Athens had a female as their chief protector, which suggests that they stayed closest to the old religion and that their citizens came from the oldest stock.

The Pelasgians, indeed, had given Athena a less dramatic birth. She came from Libya, they thought, and had stayed in Crete before arriving on the mainland. Her womanliness was still represented in her patronage of cooking, weaving and spinning. She was also supposed to have invented a variety of useful and peaceful things; the earthenware pot, the plough and rake, the ox-yoke, horse-bridle and chariot. Although as good at fighting as Ares himself, her real interest was arbitration and the settling of disputes. She was said to intervene on the accused's side at meetings of the Court of Areopagos. And she was less small-minded than her Olympian sisters. Thus she blinded Tiresias when he caught her bathing but at the same time gave him the gift of inward sight, so that he became a wise man and a prophet. Admittedly, when a girl called Arachne set herself up as a rival in spinning, and showed Athena a robe in which the goddess (much to her surprise) could find no flaw, she lost her temper and tore the work in pieces. Arachne promptly hanged herself. Athena relented to the extent of giving her life again. Thinking of the embroidery, she turned her into a spider. As both earth-goddess and wise

protectress, Athena was a cut above the others.

But a more lasting solution came to be more and more accepted in the fourth century, after Athens' empire had passed away but when her thinkers were at the height of their power. This was the solution—or, rather, solutions—of philosophy. Philosophers from Ionia had already questioned the gods as they probed into the nature of the universe, but Sokrates and Plato saw one Holy Power of Truth and Beauty as supreme in the heavens, and Sokrates often mentioned a Daimon or "Voice" which spoke to him and told him what to do. It is no wonder that Christians saw in Plato and his follower, Aristotle, men who were close to their own ideas about things. Much thinking in the monasteries and schools of the Middle Ages, and in Roman Catholic theology to this day, is based upon the mind of the Athenian Aristotle, as his was on the minds of the Athenians Plato and Sokrates.

Who were the Athenians?

TOM AND JANE are to find that Athena is an old goddess, worshipped in Attika before the Dorians brought their own gods down with them, although not at first honoured on Poseidon's Akropolis hill. They have noticed, too, how Kimon and his sister describe themselves as Ionians and *indigenous*; that is to say, as having always lived in Attika. And they have guessed that the history Athenians love so much cannot in fact be always true. What are the true facts of the origins of the Athenians?

Here is a very brief outline of a most difficult period. About 2000 to 1500 B.C. there flourished the wonderful civilisation of Minoan Crete—King Minos himself had the labyrinth and the minotaur, and an English archæologist, Sir Arthur Evans, dug up his labyrinthine palace and exposed many paintings of girls somersaulting over the horns of bulls (the minotaur of legend was a sort of bull). Either this Minoan cult spread to the Greek mainland, and especially to the Plain of Argos, or else there was some parallel culture there. Scholars have dug up the great akropolis of Mycenæ, and also of Argos

and Tiryns (all settlements dotting the Argive Plain) and have found remains very similar to those of Crete, although not entirely the same. The life lived in these citadels they call *Mycenaean*. Now one of the features of Mycenaean building is the setting up of walls made of huge rough stones, either left in their original shapes or else only shaped sufficiently to make them fit together (these are called *polygonal* or *Cyclopean* walls, since the stones are many sided and only a giant or Cyclops could move them). Even more marvellous are the huge underground beehive tombs reached by passages made in this way. Now here comes the point: *these walls and several small tombs have been found on the Athenian Akropolis*. So the history of Athens goes back at least as far as the Mycenaeans with their close Minoan connections.

But here there is a complication. While the Bronze Age Mycenaeans were flourishing, we know that waves of northerners came sweeping down through Greece. These were the Achaians,



Minoan girls and bull

whom Kimon loves to describe from his Homer, for it was they who fought at Troy (about 1194 B.C.?). Agamemnon was lord of Mycenae and Argos, his brother of Sparta. In other words, the Achaians must have taken over the Mycenaean culture and to some extent kept it going—it is not possible to see a break between the Mycenaean “Pelasgians” (whoever they exactly were) and the Mycenaean Achaians. However, shortly after the fall of Troy, a new wave of Greeks appeared from the north, burnt the citadels of Mycenae and Argos and introduced what appears to have been at first a much less artistic and lively culture than that found in the lovely Mycenaean vases or in the gold masks they fitted over the faces of their dead kings. These were the Dorian Greeks, who later built the tough Spartan way of life and who created the tough but beautiful simplicity of the Doric column and the Doric temple; the first result of their coming seems to have been something of a Dark Age, and indeed Sparta itself, the chief Dorian state, was fairly soon to strangle its artistic life in favour of military discipline.

The Dorians seem to have driven many of the earlier Greeks to take refuge across the sea in Ionia, but on the whole to have by-passed Attika. The Athenians were thus certainly “older” than the Dorians, and they had it in common with the people living in Ionia that they had escaped the worst effects of the Dorian Dark Age, although they learnt much from

Dorian genius when it came into flower—the Parthenon is, after all, a Doric temple. Whether the “Ionians” were a branch of the Achaians, or a tribe or group of tribes who invaded Greece separately, is difficult to know. And whether the ancestors of the Athenians were really indigenous—Pelasgians or aborigines—is a dark and foggy subject indeed, darker than our own King Arthur and his Round Table. But it is to this legendary time, before the Doric invasion, that the Athenian hero-kings and their goddess belong: Kekrops, Erechtheus, Pandion, Aegeus, Theseus. As we have seen, the Athenians liked to imagine that Attika had been unified under Theseus.

As early as the ninth century B.C. the darkness begins to lift—and it does so because of some geometrically patterned vases dug up near the Dipylon Gate in Athens. The paintings on these show that the Athenians were already very clever at vase-painting, and that they must have been living quite a rich and exciting life. It is supposed that this century, too, saw the birth of Homer. When Homer “came to Athens”, in the form, of course, of his works and not of his person, the Classical Age in Athens can be said to begin.

The Youth of Athens

TOM AND JANE can imagine the Akropolis as a Mycenaeen fortress, then, and can see it dominating the plain during the time when Athens was ruled by kings and when the power of these kings came to be limited by an *aristocracy* (that is, to say, by the leading tribal families) who chose a general or *polemarch* and also a regent to take over much of the kingly power. Gradually this aristocracy started to rely more upon wealth than upon birth. And at some time during the ninth century B.C., as kings yielded to aristocracy, a gifted man united Attika.

From then on the story is that of the growth of Athenian democracy, and of the various steps by which the right to rule the city-state was extended to all classes of citizens. When Tom and Jane are shown round the Agora and climb up to the meeting place of the Assembly, they will be able to follow all this in rather more detail. At the moment, though—since we are still standing on the Akropolis—let us snatch a glimpse into a period of Athens' growing up, when a tyrant (*turannos*) seized the sacred rock.

The Athenians of Kimon's day nearly all hated the memory of this tyrant, and praised to the skies the men who assassinated his son and were held to have driven his family away.

Peisistratos was a hero of the little war in which the island of Salamis had been conquered, and the power of Megara weakened. He was an exceptional man. In fact the great historian, Herodotos, writing a century later, tells one of his typical "tall" or magical stories about him. His father was preparing a sacrifice during a visit to the Olympic Games. He put a piece of meat into a cauldron of cold water which he intended placing on the fire. To his astonishment the water immediately boiled! What on earth did this mean, for it certainly must mean something? The wise man approached said that it meant "*Never have a son.*" Nevertheless Peisistratos was born, and entered the politics of the day. Finding that there was a dispute between two groups of citizens, the Men of the Coast and the Men of the Plain (we do not know now what it was about), he made himself the head of a third party, the poorest of all, the Mountain Men. He then thought of a clever trick. He took a dagger and cut wounds in his own body and in the bodies of his mules and then, streaming with blood and appearing to be in a very bad way, he drove his chariot into the Agora. "Enemies have viciously attacked me!" he groaned. "My life is in danger—and I am a man known to you all, I was your general at

Salamis. Grant me a bodyguard that I may be able to protect myself." And doubtless his cry was taken up by some of the Mountain Men who had followed him into the square, or whom he had secretly placed there.

The result was that he got his bodyguard, armed it with clubs, and then rushed up to the Akropolis and made himself the master of Athens. He was no Hitler, though, but a good governor who did not interfere with the laws. After five years he was none the less driven out, only to be invited back by one of the disputing aristocrats. This time, Herodotos tells us, he used another trick which, incidentally, shows us how important to the Athenians Athena Polias was:

"There was a woman called Phye, six feet high, all but two inches, and very beautiful too. They dressed her in a complete suit of armour, rehearsed her in the part she was to play, put her in a chariot, and drove into the city, where heralds (already sent there) proclaimed, 'Men of Athens: give kind welcome to Peisistratos, whom Athena herself honours above all other men and is now conducting to her own citadel.'"

Herodotos called this a ridiculous scheme, especially as he thought that the Athenians, whom he calls the most intelligent of the Greeks, should not have been so gullible. Nevertheless, it worked. Peisistratos returned, only to be driven out once again. This second exile he employed usefully by making friends abroad, and raising

money and mercenaries. When he fought his way back in 540 B.C., he came to stay until his death in 528.

We can see now that he did much for the glory of Athens. He developed the olive industry and increased the circulation of coined money. He helped the peasants and the city poor. He



"There was a woman called Phye..."

improved the water-supply, building the public well-houses and his private Klepsydra ("secret water") on the Akropolis itself. He started the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and built another to Dionysos on the south side of the Akropolis. But what is most interesting to us is that it is he who started, or saw fully on their way, three of the most important expressions of the Athenian spirit: the drama, the public recitation and private study of the Homeric poems, and the Panathenaic Festival itself. Homer had, in fact, come to Athens, and the increased worship of Dionysos led to the *Dionysia* developing into much more than a simple "goat-song" sung and danced by a chorus of satyrs dressed up in skins at a rustic wine festival—the leader separated from the chorus, and then this leader split into two or three *characters*, and these characters eventually climbed up on to a stage above the chorus accompanying them. Thespis won the first drama prize we know of in 534 B.C.

Yet so little did the Athenians of Perikles' day like a tyrant that when they looked back to the period of Peisistratos they saw little but the legend that the two heroic friends, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, had detested his family and that one of his sons, Hipparchos, had been assassinated. The good he did they ascribed to the reformer, Solon, who came before him, or to the reformer Kleisthenes who followed his family's rule. It was not until Aristotle that a fairer picture prevailed: "His administration was

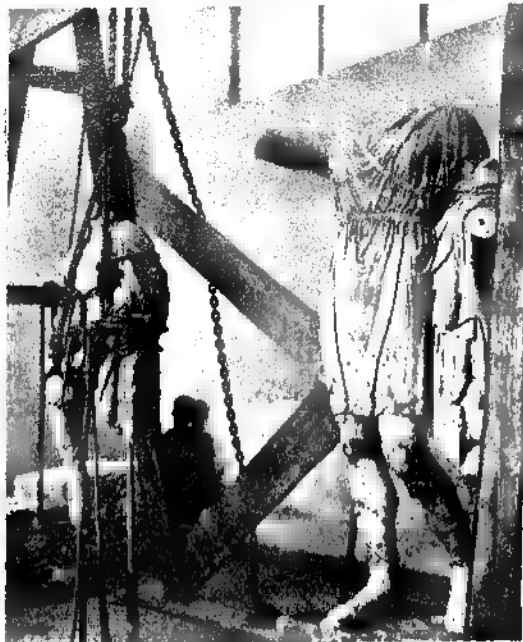
temperate . . . and more like constitutional government than tyranny."

Such is one glimpse of the youth of Athens from the Akropolis walls. Others come from the time of the Persian Wars. An Athenian contingent had helped the Ionians to revolt against the Persian king, Darius, and when the revolt had been suppressed, and the great Ionian Greek city of Miletus destroyed, Darius remembered his distant enemies. His first expedition in 492 B.C. had to be put back because of a storm. His second, in 490, reached the plain of Marathon, only about twenty-six miles from Athens. One of its members was Hippias, the son of Peisistratos who had escaped being assassinated and had ruled as a tyrant for some years before being thrown out.

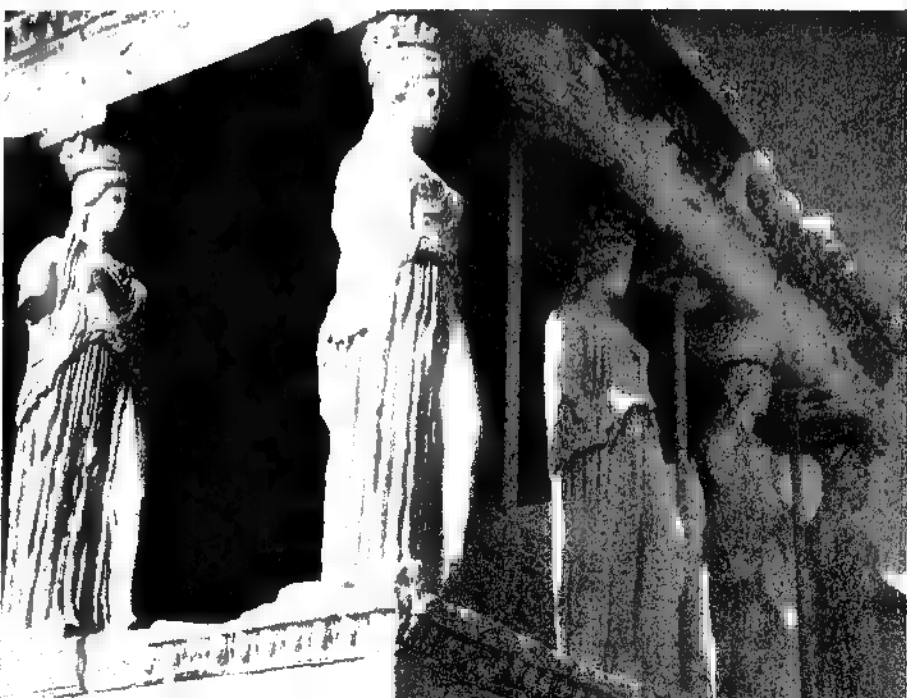
Athens hurriedly summoned Spartan aid (the runner Pheidippides is supposed to have covered one hundred and seventy miles of mountainous road in two days) but the Spartan army was slow to come. In the end Athens had to face the Persians almost alone. Her general deliberately made the wings of his force of hoplites stronger than the centre, with the result that a great many of the Persians were caught in the jaws of this trap. Only one hundred and ninety-two Athenians are said to have fallen compared with more than six thousand of the enemy. We can imagine the tense, troubled waiting on the Akropolis Hill, and perhaps also on Lykabettos and Hymettos and Pentelikon. Was victory possible when the



Archaic youth from Lemnos.



(Left) Reconstructing statues. *(Below)* The porch of the Erechtheion with its caryatids.





Ionic Erechtheion, Doric Parthenon.



(Left) The Propylaea. *(Below)* The Roman Tower of the Winds, with a Mosque behind.



numbers were so uneven? Would Hippias return to pay off old scores in torture and blood?

Suddenly a small distant figure was spotted on the dusty track. It was Pheidippides again, running for all he was worth. He reached the city, gasping, apparently desperate. He had just time to cry out "We have won!" before—so the story goes—he fell dead.

However, from a military point of view it was more important that the Athenians marched back quickly to their city. When the Persian fleet, with the remnants of its army, sailed round to Phalíron, they realised they would be opposed in force, and made a quick get-away.

Much more serious was the huge expedition organised by Darius' son Xerxes in 480 B.C. This time the Greeks organised a united force, although the Ionians were too close to Persia to help and some in fact fought on the Persian side, while the Sicilian Greeks were held at bay by the Phœnicians of Carthage. A first resistance at the Vale of Tempe in Northern Greece was called off for fear of an outflanking movement; a second failed, through treachery, at Thermopylae, although Leonidas, the Spartan who was Commander in Chief of all the Greek forces, won undying glory for himself and his hard core of three hundred men. After this Thebes submitted, Corinth and Sparta thought only of saving themselves by defending the Isthmus that led to the Peloponnese, and the Athenians had to evacuate the Akropolis and city, sending the women and

children to Salamis, Aegina and Troezen. Thence they watched the flames rage up from the burning temples and shrines, the markets, shops and houses until a great cloud hung over the plain of Attika.

All that was left was the "wooden walls" the Delphic Oracle had told the Athenians to trust in. Athens had contributed much the largest number of ships to the joint fleet—one hundred and eighty in fact—but the Admiral was not Themistokles, but a Spartan, since Sparta was still the dominant power in Greece. It needed all Themistokles' wiliness to take the initiative and lure the Persian fleet into the close confines of Salamis Bay where the lighter Athenian ships could outmanœuvre them. It was so complete and glorious a victory that Xerxes, who had watched from a throne on the shore, retired at once, while the forces he left behind were defeated next year at Plateia.

Our last picture can well be of the citizens returned to the Akropolis and watching the daring fortification scheme by which the famous Long Walls were built to link Athens with the coast, first one wall running to Piraeus and another to Phaliron, later a middle wall taking the place of this latter and enclosing Piraeus-Athens in a huge oblong fort. But by this time the youth of Athens was over: the Persians were defeated, Sparta equalled, the democracy well-laid, the empire begun and the Akropolis on the way to being re-built.

PART THREE

THE LIFE IN THE STREETS

An Important Day

TOM AND JANE were invited to stay on at Athens, which pleased them very much (except for the food and the sanitary arrangements), and one morning shortly after the great feast Kimon came to them in very high spirits.

"Let's go for a walk and explore the streets and the Agora; it's a big day for us. Last night my uncle Thrasyllus was chosen to be President of the Executive Committee; Chief of the whole polis, in fact. He's sent word we can visit him at his office in the Tholos when business slackens off about noon."

"But your father is an archon," Tom answered, a bit puzzled. "Isn't that more important?"

"In a way, yes. An archon holds his commission for a year. But to be *Epistatos* of the *Prytany* is to have command of the keys of the treasuries and temples and of the Seal of State. It can only happen to a man once."

Tom laughed. "You must explain those long words, Kimon. Although I'm able—heaven knows how—to speak your language, I don't know what *Pryt* . . . something or other means."

"Well, you see, we have the *Ecclesia*, that's the Assembly of all the citizens, and then we have the *Boulé*, the Council of the Five Hundred, chosen in fifties from all of the ten tribes, but even the *Boulé*'s too big to carry on detailed business, so out of their number is chosen the executive committee of fifty which holds office for a tenth of each year. This is the *Prytany*—they take their meals in a building on the *Agora* and some of them are on duty all night. Today Uncle is their President (*Epistatos*)."

"This means that Athens has ■ different President every day of the year. And, if I've got my arithmetic right, that at least thirty-five men get the chance of being chief out of every fifty," Tom reflected.

"And I'll have to admit that, with all our elections by lot, we sometimes get pretty funny types as Presidents—or archons, for that matter."

So it was that Kimon, Tom and Jane, accompanied by Demeas and Phyllis, started off for the *Agora*. Poor Persephone wasn't allowed to go with them. There was sewing to do, Hestia said, but the young people could see that her mother did not much approve of her going about in public. Girls had plenty to amuse them in the house, Kimon remarked, quite unconcerned. They had their hoops and toys and dolls and jewellery, and they could throw up knuckle-bones and catch as many as possible on the backs of their hands.

For, as the great general Xenophon was to say later when recommending a young woman as a wife, ■ girl was brought up “under the strictest restraint, in order that she might see as little, hear as little, and ask as few questions as possible”.

Shopping

THE FIRST THING which struck the children was how few women they saw. Nearly all the shopping was done by men. The head of the Athenian household walked several paces in front of his slave, who carried the basket and a purse, and was expected to make the more ordinary purchases himself while his master greeted his friends.

"If my father was buying ■ new horse, or getting the chariot repaired, or ordering armour, he'd probably spend hours over the business—but garlic and beans and figs, they're jobs for slaves! Except for that chap over there. . . ." Kimon added, laughing and pointing at a young knight in uniform who had taken off his helmet and was getting the fishwife to fill it with herrings.

The narrow streets were frequently arcaded on both sides, and the shops were little more than holes in the walls, except that the shop owners had pushed the goods out on to trestle tables and festooned them around the dark doorways. Donkeys and mules passed by, loaded with vegetables, bunches of dried herbs, great bundles of brushwood or bags of charcoal, and here and

there were little markets with stalls. Goats were tethered there, and sheep too, while you couldn't possibly count the numbers of hens, geese and pigeons. But Jane had noticed something she wanted to ask Kimon about.

"In England we have all sorts of different shops in one street," she said, "but here you seem to have a street for carpenters and another for grain-sellers and another for goldsmiths or ironmongers. If all the goods are put together in one place, doesn't the best shop get all the trade?"

"Oh, no, it's much better for us. We can compare prices and goods and maybe get a real bargain. And then people still have their favourite shops, and the poor go to one and the rich to another."

Tom thought for a moment. "I suppose if all the same shops are together, prices will stay fairly low—I mean there'll be lots of competition and nobody will dare to charge more than the others unless he has specially good stuff to sell."

"In any case, we Greeks love bargaining. Look at that old man getting his supply of oil. He insists on tasting every grade, and it's all running down his beard and, look! he's wiping his oily fingers on his tattered himation. And, of course, he never really intended getting anything but the crudest quality—which we use for the lamps. He smacks his lips and declares it has the best flavour, because it is closest to Mother Earth, and why should we mortals try to improve

on her! I bet he's a retired schoolmaster or an unsuccessful *Sophist* (a sort of philosopher) or something like that. He doesn't have any slave and he's got all his shopping bundled up in a fold of his dirty cloak so that his skinny thighs are showing. And now he's ringing every coin of his change to see he hasn't been cheated—and then popping them into his mouth. It's an old Athenian custom to carry your change in your cheek."

Tom and Jane knew by now that the young in Athens were taught to respect the old and they were therefore surprised to see Kimon move towards the old fellow with a jeering gesture as though about to taunt him, only to be caught by the paidagogos, pulled back and given quite a violent pinch on the bare arm.

"My son, think of your guests," the slave-tutor said sharply. "And, in any case, you know perfectly well that a young boy must conduct himself modestly in the street."

"It's just that he's so ugly and dirty," Kimon protested, "and ugliness means that the gods do not love a man and that he has evil inside him."

"That is for the gods to decide, not for you. Besides I hear that men are beginning to talk of a certain Sokrates, who is short, bald and very ugly—the son of a midwife and a stone-mason—but who has an intelligent and beautiful soul. Crowds of highborn youths gather about him in the Agora, hanging on his words. He used to be a sculptor, they say."

Kimon evidently disagreed. "I've seen that Sokrates often and I call him 'Simo', snub-nose—the name we give to dolphins. I don't think he's so awfully clever. He just goes about asking *Why? Why? Why? What do you mean by this? Define your terms. The truly wise man admits that he knows nothing.* Is that the way for a philosopher to talk? I like the philosophers who train you to make brilliant speeches in the Assembly and the law-courts, so that you can make black appear white. *They don't admit to being ignorant.*"

Tom didn't understand all of this, and decided to ask Kimon more about it when he had the chance, but at the moment other things caught his attention for they had now entered the Street of the Potters.

"Here is the source of much of our wealth and fame," the Greek boy cried dramatically—"we are potters and olive-growers as well as seamen, you know. What do you want? A portable oven or a cooking bell for your bread—both are jolly useful, I can assure you." Evidently his high spirits had not suffered from the paidagogos's disapproval. He darted to the stall and showed the children how the cooking bell of reddish earthenware could be first heated in the fire and then placed over the dough with coals piled around it, while the oven could be slipped over any convenient brazier. "What about this frying-pan, or these casseroles, or a nice strong grill to cook steaks on? And here's a mortar to grind flour in, and ■ brazier, and over there are wash-

ing bowls and bath-tubs in assorted sizes. And a little baby's lavatory. And a jug with a hole in the bottom which acts as a kind of clock when men are making speeches in the law-courts—just about twelve minutes, and you've had it!"

"Our frying-pans are made of metal, and so are our stoves," said Jane. "And our baths are of shining white porcelain. We don't grind *our* flour, we buy it in a packet." She paused, wondering if she might sound rude. But Kimon was not put out.

"Everything here is made of clay, although rich people may have a bronze jar or two and perhaps a set of silver plates. Clay's much cheaper, especially when the slaves are clumsy and break everything. My father had to flog one of our boys only last week because the silly idiot smashed the wine-mixer just when his men's club was coming to dinner! I must say he took it without flinching, although Dad used his riding-whip—I'm too young for that; I only get the thong." The children shuddered at this and looked at Kimon with new respect.

"Oh, what lovely toys!" It was Jane who made the exclamation. She and Phyllis had moved on to another shop where all kinds of little clay figures were displayed, including several which illustrated the use of pottery utensils: one, for instance, showed a cooking-lesson and included mother, small daughter, pot and stove, while another was of a girl sitting (rather than lying) in a smallish tub. On a nearby tray were tiny images

of heads, legs, arms and trunks; there was even a nose and an ear. "And these funny things here—are they a game in which you have to fit the pieces together?"

"We *do* have toys, of course," Phyllis explained as Tom and Kimon joined them, "but these figures are mostly used for putting in graves out at the Kerameikos beyond the Dipylon Gate. They keep the dead company and also please the gods. As for these bits and pieces of the body, they are votive offerings. If you have a broken arm and pray to Asklepios to mend it, you hang a little arm in front of his statue."

"But surely this is a toy!" Jane pointed to a charming little donkey with a monkey on its back. The donkey stood firmly with legs wide



"They keep the dead company ..."

apart and long ears erect, while the monkey had turned sideways, flung out its arm and thrust back its head, as though it was telling everyone with its big mouth how obstinate the donkey was.

"Ah, yes, that could be used as a toy or as an ornament." The paidagogos knew all about it. "It comes from ■ town called Tanagra, many miles north of here in Boetia, where they are expert at making these little terracotta figures. I think it must be more than a hundred years old."

As they passed the shops, he explained that Athens herself was especially famous for the shaping and painting of various types of vase used in wine-drinking and in the storage of oil and perfume and, of course, water. The first type of painting had been band upon band of geometrical patterns, with perhaps a line or two of funny skinny little figures; next had come black figures on red; now these colours were reversed. When Kimon's father entertained his *hetaireia* (club) at home, the very best pottery was used; the lustrously black-glazed *kylixes* or shallow cups from which the wine was actually drunk, the *oinochoes* or wine-jars to fill these cups with, and then the big mixing-bowl and wine-cooler too, with a *hydria* to hold water and perhaps a *lekane* in reserve in case anybody felt ill.

"Of course the wine comes in *amphorae*," he went on and pointed. "They are those graceful slender pots over there that come down to ■

point so that they have to rest on stands. But it is made in huge jars called *pithoi*. Oh yes, there's ever such a to-do when Master has a party. Sometimes Kimon helps with the flowers."

"We have flowers on our tables, too," Jane said. She found the names of all the pots and vases confusing and much preferred to twist a *kylix* or *oinochoe* between her fingers, following the picture round. It was just the tiniest bit like a strip-cartoon in a comic, she thought.

"Oh no, not on the tables," laughed Phyllis, "—on the gentlemen's heads. Everyone has to have a nice garland—hyacinth, larkspur, roses. And sometimes a myrtle branch to pass between them to show who's going to sing or recite."

Soon after this they passed a house which had the head and horns of an ox nailed up on its entrance, with a big garland draped across it. The Herm by the entrance was also garlanded.

"That's the house of Lysis the son of Aditos," said Kimon. "His son, Orestes, goes to my school. We belong to the same tribe. They're all terrible show-offs in that house, though. They've hung up the ox-head to show what a rich sacrifice they've just made—not just a kid or goat. Lysis is a big exporter of salt and honey. He keeps a pet jackdaw and an ape, and do you know what he did?—he got the best armourer in town to make a little bronze shield for the jackdaw so that it hops up and down its ladder like a hoplite. And he has his own wrestling-room and ball-court where people can hold



OINOCHOE



LEKANE



KYLIX

displays of sports and music. He makes Orestes go to the barbers once a week and allows him to use perfume. Nothing's too good for a son of mine, he says—and soon he'll be taken up by a knight of one of the oldest families for he's going to be a real beauty! Actually Orestes is a spotty-looking chap and, although he's pounds heavier than me, I can throw him easily at wrestling."

Once again Tom made a mental note to question Kimon about all this.

A Queer Old Man

AT THIS MOMENT they came to a cross-roads where a group of people were watching a very fat old man who seemed in a quandary. A black cat had just crossed his path, it seemed, and he stood dithering and muttering prayers, for superstition demanded that he must wait till someone else passed by before proceeding on his way. Then he called out to one of the peasant lads, "Pass, my dear boy, pass. I'm a busy man and I'm due at the money-changer's, and ill fortune bars my way. By the holy Apollo, do please get a move on!"

Just for the fun of it, though, nobody was prepared to move and one of the little crowd called out. "Try the stones, daddy. It's better with the stones. And don't forget to purify yourself at the Nine Springs and put a morsel of bay-leaf from the temple in your mouth."

The old man began looking about for three pebbles in the dust of the street. When he found them he threw them clumsily across the path that the cat had taken and everyone cheered.

"Don't strain yourself now, or you'll have to

dedicate a paunch to Asklepios!" someone shouted as he waddled off.

"I don't suppose that in your far-away country behind the North Wind you have silly ideas about black cats?" Kimon said to Tom.

"Oh yes, we do. And about spilling salt . . . and the number thirteen."

At this moment the old man was stopped by two countrymen wearing rough goat-skins. He was very put out, of course. He had to get money from the bank he said and then go down to Piræus to pay for a consignment of Egyptian flax.

"My dear sir, we won't keep you a moment. We can see that you're a man of both years and wisdom, and we badly need an arbitrator. You see my friend here comes from Mount Parnes, where he has a smallholding, and the other day he found a boy-child exposed in the ditch by his vineyard. He rescued the little fellow but, being ■ bachelor, he soon found that kind intentions were not enough—the baby squealed and squawled, to put it plainly, and turned all red with rage and started coming out in spots as though it had caught the plague, from which Zeus defend us—and he asked my wife Penelope and myself if we would take it, seeing that Eileithyia, the Goddess of Childbirth, has never visited our cottage. We agreed to bring it up as our own."

It was comical to see the superstitious old gentleman torn between his business and his

desire to be important and give valuable advice.

"Exposed a child, eh?" he muttered. "The same misfortune once happened to me. My wife had just given birth to a fine boy when a crow was seen on the Akropolis, and we all know that Athena expressly forbade any crow to settle there. It was a bad omen. I ordered the child to be exposed."

"Sad, sir, very sad," the peasant continued. "Doubtless you left certain birth-tokens with the baby—a necklace perhaps, or ornaments?"

"I am not a poor man. I did. Including a splendid ring, two serpents clasping each other, which my father took off a Persian at Marathon." He frowned. "I was never sure whether that barbarian thing was lucky or not. I had it tied round the boy's neck."

"At Marathon, sir? Ah, those were the days! Hellenes were Hellenes then." The flatterer sighed. "To think how prices have risen since—and old families like yours, sir, landed gentlemen of the aristocracy, don't get the respect they used to I'm afraid. Well," he went on, "it's the birth ornaments that are the point. You see the baby was given to my wife and me as you might say *raw*, not a trinket, not a necklace or a ring, the poor little darling, and now we find that Smikrines here took the stuff off him before the transfer. Thieved it, in fact. Gobbled it up greedily. It's all there in the bag at his girdle."

"Honourable sir," the other broke in, "I

gave the baby, which is surely ■ great gift—why should I give the baby's little bits and pieces too? Have a heart, sir. I found him. I might have caught the plague off him." Every time the plague was mentioned, the old man shuddered and muttered a prayer.

"Ah, but think of the stories of the gods and heroes," the first speaker pleaded. "Suppose the baby's a prince, suppose someone rich was later to claim him—how will they know without a necklace or ■ ring to guide them?"

The old man paused for reflection, bending his head to one side, puckering his brow and raising a finger to his cheek. Finally he pronounced his judgment.

"It would be impious to separate the birth-tokens from the child. Who knows under what divine care the child may rest? Why . . .," his voice sank in awe, "it might even be a god in disguise!"

At this Milo made a joyful dive in the direction of Smikrines' bag while the old man muttered, nodded his head, thought of his business appointment and began to waddle away and then, terrified lest his decision had angered one of the gods, pulled out a small jar of oil and proceeded to anoint the nearest Herm with it. The children couldn't help laughing, although Tom and Jane were secretly very shocked that the Greeks *exposed* unwanted children with such apparent unconcern.

The Agora

THE AGORA WAS the centre of the social and political life of Athens just as the Akropolis was the centre of religion. It was a place of great dignity, and although some writers say that a market was held there as well as in other parts of the city, it is likely that the stalls were cleared away by noon or earlier.

Tom and Jane noticed that its principal feature was a number of arcades (stoas) which offered shady and cool places for the citizens to walk and talk. These stoas were made of fine marble picked out in colour, and they may have had paintings on the inner wall. The Painted Stoa certainly did; it was connected to the western side of the Agora by a row of statues of the God Hermes, and it was between these statues that the children made their entrance. The government buildings were on this western side, under the Hephaesteion hill. The first they came to, on their right as they entered, was the Stoa of Zeus or Royal Stoa, so called because it was the seat of the "King" archon—the magistrate who looked after the sacrifices and tried cases of impiety and in whose person the

last faint remains of the early kingship were still preserved. In this colonnade stood the stone tablets on which the laws of the great reformer and constitution-maker, Solon, were written down for all to see, just as the British might display Magna Carta or the Americans their Bill of Rights in some prominent position. In front was a sacred stone used for taking oaths.

"My father had to swear on it that he would be a just magistrate," Kimon said. "All the archons have to, as well as witnesses and arbitrators—but the archons have also to promise to give a gold statue to Delphi if they fail in this duty. Imagine the expense! *The statue has to be as heavy as this stone.*"

He showed them the small temple of Apollo Patroos next door, and then the big stoa of the Metroon, which was the record office of Athens, full of archives on papyrus and parchment and copies of important writings such as poems and plays. Some distance in front of this building, across a big drain, rose a pedestal on which were placed statues of the Ten Legendary Heroes who had given their names to the ten tribes of Athens: Ajax, Leos and so on. At this point Jane said she didn't understand about the tribes, or about Solon's laws either, but Kimon asked her to wait until they visited his uncle, who would be able to explain everything.

"This pedestal is used for public notices, by the way. When soldiers are called up for service overseas their names are written here under the

statue of their tribe. You also have the names of people who have performed honourable service and are worthy of praise. Bad men get posted too. And, look!—over here are the tablets containing new laws which the Council are preparing for the Assembly."

Behind the Metroon the children found the Bouletarion, where the Council of the Five Hundred met; and nearby was a round domed building, the Tholos.

"Uncle's in there now. It's the house of the Prytany. They get free dinner every day and a third of them have to sleep there every night, just to be sure there's somebody always on guard."

"It's where the standard weights and measures are kept," the paidagogos added.

To the left of the Tholos, and some way back, was another building, the Strategeion or War Office, where Perikles must have spent long hours considering the military position of the city, from the upkeep of the Long Walls and Piraeus fortifications to the latest incident on the frontier opposite Thebes or Corinth, or in the subject islands.

It happened that Tom had seen some plans of the Agora at school, and so he was particularly interested to discover what it looked like in the time of Perikles, because he knew that the buildings were to be changed and added to many times, as when the Odeion was built in its central position about two hundred years after

the time of this visit, and the Stoa erected on the eastern side by Attalos, King of Pergamon in Asia Minor. The giant statues which today stand in front of the ruin of the Odeion were not carved until the fifth century A.D.—in late Roman times, that is to say, and eight hundred years after Tom and Jane's tour. Another thing that Tom knew was that the Painted Stoa lies today somewhere under the houses beyond the railway cutting in an area not yet excavated. The Agora buildings that Kimon showed him were almost all on the west.

But, once again, it was people who caught the children's eye. The scene was so animated and noisy; there was so much talking and shouting and laughing. It seemed that hundreds and hundreds of men were seeking to amuse and instruct each other. In one stoa, for example, a stocky worried little fellow was pacing up and down beside a very poised and fluent friend. This man would make a remark and follow it with an extravagant gesture, throwing up his hand to heaven or clutching his brow or beating his breast. Each time he did this, the little man copied him in a very awkward manner. Some of the words drifted over to our party.

"I have borne six sons for the service of the state, oh citizens!" the actor-like man cried as he flung out his arm. "And yet the gods have dealt hardly with me . . ." (the arm dropped towards the ground with palm extended) ". . . for two of them died in the very flower of their youth"

(here the hand curled and was raised slowly to the heart).

"I have borne six sons . . ." the little man began in a squeaking voice, raising his arm jerkily as though a donkey were tugging at the end of ■ rein.

"No, no, no," his friend interrupted him. "My dear Aristippos, you will never convince the jury if you play the bumpkin like that!"

Phyllis couldn't stop giggling. "It's a gentleman learning a speech for the law-courts," she explained. "Don't he look silly!" For, as the children learned, barristers were not allowed, and both prosecutor and defendant must give their own cases. The result was that they sought professional advice beforehand. The trouble was, as they were to hear many times, that the juries or *heliasts*, being selected by lot from the citizens, knew little about the law and were therefore easily swayed by sob-stuff and shows of patriotism.

But this was by no means the only speech the children heard that morning. In another corner ■ wandering schoolmaster was soliciting pupils. He was one of the Sophists Kimon had said he preferred to Sokrates, but Tom soon decided that he must be a rather poor specimen of the type, for his main idea seemed to be to show off the width of his knowledge and to promise brilliant success to anyone who came to his school.

"Knowledge is power," he was saying in ■

rich self-satisfied voice, drawing towards him a couple of smug youths who were evidently his pupils, "and these charming young men, both sons of distinguished fathers—from Thebes one, from Corinth the other—will be the first to tell you that I have opened to them the mysteries of geography, history, astronomy, medicine, music, horsemanship, acoustics, mathematics, the nature of the universe, good manners, state-craft, the best methods of farming and how to conduct a wine-feast in the most elegant and fashionable way. Knowledge is power," he repeated, throwing back his head and tugging at his pointed black beard, "but to be wise is useless unless one knows the way of the world and the manners of society, how to temper truth with tact, soften sincerity with charm, and win the confidence of one's listeners with an apt quotation, a pleasing joke or an appeal to their particular interests. I have several places still open and will contract to teach a youth of fifteen years and over for three years for the modest sum of 7,000 drachmas . . ." here he coughed politely, "which is a great deal less than my friend Protagoras asks."

"The price will drop," the old paidagogos said, "now that there are so many of these fellows about. Sokrates teaches for nothing—and he teaches real *areti* (virtue) not just political and social success. In any case the old poets always said you couldn't teach a man to be a gentleman. Either he was or he wasn't."

"I bet he's going to give a sample lecture,"

said Kimon. "Yes—see what's happening? Someone's brought him a dead pigeon and demanded a funeral speech, a *panegyric*. He'll show how clever he is by talking about the dove just as though it were Herakles or Leonidas."

However, the children didn't wait to hear the Sophist develop this clever idea. Their attention was caught by a group of tumblers who were doing back-somersaults and hand-stands on the marble pavement, and then by a man who had just bought two slaves and was praising them to everyone he met, repeating "They're fine sturdy fellows, aren't they? Look at their biceps and the depth of their chests. Just wait till I get them out on my farm. They'll shame my hired labourers, that they will."

"They're lucky not to be going to the silver-mines," said Kimon. "We Greeks treat our slaves well—eh, Demeas?—but my father always says that conditions in the mines are bad."

Ahead of them groups had gathered about a man who was complaining bitterly because a liturgy (*liturgeia*) had been demanded of him, and he claimed that he was both too busy and too poor to perform it properly. The children were told that no regular income tax was levied upon the rich, but that they were expected to give their money and time when called upon: thus the *trierarchy* was the duty of equipping and manning one of the triremes for the navy, including sailing in it yourself and being responsible for its upkeep.

"If it was the liturgy of ■ *choregia*," the man explained, "I should be able to combine it with carrying on my own affairs. Besides I know something about the theatre with its singing and dancing and I should enjoy the rivalry with the other chorus-masters . . ."

"Come off it, Simonides," someone broke in, "we all know you like the excitement of the Dionysia, with the competitions between the boys' choirs and the play festivals—you want



"... wave-patterns or the Greek key . . ."

to be crowned and granted ■ bronze tripod to set up in the Street of the Tripods with your name on it in big letters. And instead they have demanded an *architheoria* of you, which means equipping and leading an official deputation to the Festival of Apollo at Delos . . .'

"He'd prefer it to be Delphi, I'm sure," croaked another of the listeners, "or even Olympia. Simonides gets sea-sick even in Phaliron Bay!"

"The treasuries are full. Why should I be put to the expense?" Simonides grumbled back.

"Bah, you won't get the fame, spending all that money abroad. Besides, the times are unsettled. And there are brigands . . ."

As our party turned away, Tom sighed. "Oh dear, there's so much happening all the time that I'm getting confused. Law-courts, Sophists, slave-owners, silver mines—and now this what d'you call it?—liturgy?"

"Let's take a breather," Kimon suggested. "We'll have a drink at the fountain. After that, Jane and Phyllis can go to the Women's Market and I'll take you to my school."

"Honestly, I don't think I can learn anything more."

"Oh, *you* won't have to learn anything. But we can watch the sports."

This plan was acted upon.

Kimón's School

WHEN THE BOYS arrived at Kimón's school (*skoleion*), old Demeas fell in with another paidagogos of his acquaintance and the two slaves retired to a bench in the shade of the entrance for a talk, only occasionally raising their eyes to see that all was well. But Kimón drew Tom along one of the colonnades flanking the sunny central court.

He pointed out groups of small boys between the ages of roughly seven and ten who were assembled on one side under the direction of a *grammatistis* sitting on a stool. Some were doing sums on an abacus (a framework of movable beads similar to those used in China to this day, with one line representing single units up to 10, the next tens up to a hundred, and the third hundreds up to a thousand) and then writing down the results in the complicated Greek way, which used the letters of the alphabet and not 1, 2, 3, 4, like us. Others were learning the alphabet which was carved on a slab of marble in front of them, or simple spellings written down on a roll of papyrus. Some distance away a further group was taking a music lesson from

the zither-player, each holding ■ small lyre to which they chanted and nodded their heads to keep time.

"Music is ■ very important part of our schoolwork," Kimon explained. "It covers rhythm, melody and also words. You see we recite poetry to the lyre and, when we do a play, the chorus has to chant and also perform a sort of simple dancing. Even our sports are done to music."

On another side of the court the older boys were working. The master of this "secondary" group was the *grammatikos*. Kimon very politely introduced Tom to this gentleman, who wore ■ himation without ■ tunic in the manner of a philosopher and had a long grey beard. The boys were embarking on a poetry lesson, and the subject was a famous one: the story in Homer of how the Trojan War nearly came to an end when it was decided to settle it by single-combat between Menelaos and the Trojan, Paris, who had stolen his wife Helen. First came the usual noble speeches from the leaders. Next was the sacrifice of lambs. After this the donning of armour:

"And upon his shoulders goodly Alexandros (Paris) donned his beauteous armour, even he that was lord to Helen of the lovely hair. First upon his legs set he his greaves, beautiful, fastened with silver ankle-clasps; next upon his breast he donned the corselet of his brother Lykaon, and fitted it upon himself. And over his

shoulders cast he his silver-studded sword of bronze, and then a shield great and sturdy. And on his mighty head he set a wrought helmet of horse-hair crest, whereover the plume nodded terribly, and he took him a strong spear fitted to his grasp. And in likewise warlike Menelaos donned his armour."

However, the fight did not succeed in stopping the war. Paris won the toss, so to speak, and cast the first spear without penetrating Menelaos' shield. Menelaos then threw *his* spear through Paris' shield and breast-plate and the side of his tunic, for he managed to swerve. Rushing in with his sword, he struck at the Trojan's helmet, but the blade shattered. He seized Paris by the crest, throttling him with the helmet-strap round his throat; but as he dragged him off, the strap broke. The goddess Aphrodite favoured Paris and bore him off to safety.

Tom was surprised at the formality of the lesson, which was at least as detailed as the work done in grammar-schools for the G.C.E. First the master gave a summary of the story. Then rolls of papyrus were distributed and the whole class went through the texts, checking them for any variations that the scribe might have introduced in error. "Lucky we have printing," he thought. After this there was a recitation of the poem—Kimon whispered that this was supposed to be "expressive", to extract the full beauty and swing from the words, but that it usually boiled down to separating the words (the

Greek text ran them all together), marking the syllables and phrases, and working out the rhythms. Stage four was explanation or *exegetis*. In the course of the master's questions and the boys' answers, Tom began to realise that Homer, rather like Shakespeare for us, used a different Greek from that current in Athens; there were strange old-fashioned words whose meaning had to be cleared up. And whenever the name of a character or a place appeared, the boys were expected to give detailed explanations, quoting myths, genealogies and references elsewhere in Homer or in other poets. Who was the father of a certain man, what god favoured him, what legend surrounded his birth, what were his good qualities and his bad?—such questions became ■ drill and often proceeded in almost parrot-like fashion. Finally they had all to discover the moral of the story. Evidently Homer, despite his curious picture of the gods, was a sort of bible to them.

Tom, who admired Kimon for learning such a terrific amount of poetry, thought the method employed might be rather boring. Still, the stories were very good in themselves and often blood-thirsty. "And he smote him in the liver with his sword, and his liver fell from him, and black blood therefrom filled his bosom, and he swooned, and darkness covered his eyes"—there was plenty of writing like that!

But now Kimon excused himself and beckoned Tom away, first showing him the wax tablets

with their wood backing on which the boys wrote (several tablets could be strung together on a string) and the *stylos* used, which had a flattened top to erase mistakes. As they wandered from intense sunlight to shadow, Demeas looked up inquiringly from his bench and would have risen if Kimon had not motioned him back.

"It's funny you're looked after so strictly," Tom remarked. "In my country boys of fourteen go off on their own much of the time. Many of us leave school at fifteen and get jobs or become apprentices."

"I've been wanting to talk to you about that," his friend answered quickly. "Demeas is an old dear, but he *will* fuss over me and I'm getting too old for him now. I've just about reached the school-leaving age myself. A lot of us become apprenticed to a craft or trade just as you people do—but I'm hoping to continue my education with one of the Sophists. I'm hoping my father will produce the fees to let me join Philo next year. You must meet him, he's awfully clever and charming. He's a *rhitor*, not a *grammatikos*; he trains the older boys in rhetoric—speech-making—and in the appreciation of style in poetry, but, of course, he's also a thinker in his own right."

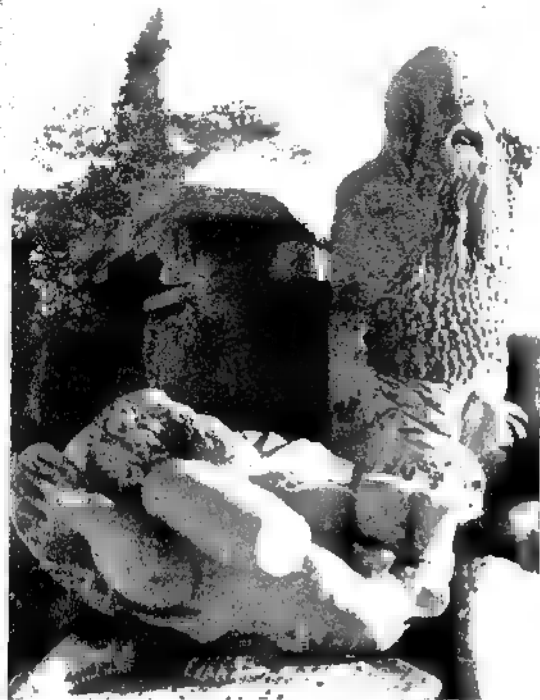
Tom remembered what had been said of Sokrates. This had intrigued him, but he hadn't quite understood at the time.

"Sokrates gives his lessons free," he started, "but you don't like him, do you?"

Kimon went a bit red and scraped his sandal

(*Right*) The Americans excavate an archaic temple by the Sacred Way. (*Below*) Aegina, ancient rival of Athens.





(Left) In the Dionysos Theatre.

(Right) Corn-cobs and lottery tickets.





(Above) Herodes Attikos Theatre from the Akropolis.

(Right) Looking from the Hephaesteion across the Agora to the Akropolis.





“... the knights prance by...”

in the dust. "Maybe I'm a bit prejudiced. I mean I'm still too young to *know*. Old Snub-nose has some very dashing well-born friends, I'll admit, but I think he confuses a chap by asking all those questions of his . . . one often makes ■ fool of oneself answering them and, anyway, one has to think everything out for oneself. Philo has marvellous lecture-notes that he hands out, all headings and subheadings, so that you feel you're really brainy when you've learnt them!"

"Perhaps Sokrates considers it best if a boy thinks for himself," Tom ventured quietly. He was longing to meet this man about whom so many people seemed to talk.

"Another thing about Philo is that he's always been very keen on sport. The boy who won the boys' boxing last year at Olympia is in his school and so is the best junior javelin-thrower at the Isthmian Games, while amongst his older friends and followers is a former *pentathlon* champion at Delphi and Nemea—everyone says he would have won the Olympic crown of bay leaves too if he'd been fit. He was famous all over the national circuit, the *periosos*."

As the boys walked up and down together, Tom remembered another question.

"When you were talking about that rich boy, Kimon—the son of the man who'd sacrificed the ox—you told how his father claimed that he'd grow up to be handsome and have lots of suitors. What did you mean?"

"Oh, that big lump!" Kimon laughed and

looked around. "He must be cutting school today, for I don't see him." Then he turned serious. "Well, we Greeks believe in personal beauty as you can see from all our statues of athletic young men—we believe there is a harmony between a well-proportioned body and face and a well-balanced mind and character. Our education aims at what we call *kalokagathia*, the mixture of goodness and beauty. And then, you see, we believe in friendship, because two friends will best appreciate the beauty of each other's form and soul. Our legends and poems are full of heroic friendships."

"Like David and Jonathan," Tom said, forgetting that Kimon would not know the history of the Jews.

"Achilles and Patrokolos, Herakles and Hylas, Harmodios and Aristogeiton . . . even Zeus was the suitor of Ganymede and Apollo of Hyacinthos. Friendships bring out the best in the character of both friends. The usual thing is for one of the friends to be an older and wiser man who has done his military service and fought in battles and travelled and played his part in the Assembly, and the other to be a mere youth with plenty to learn. We call one the Inspirer and the other the Listener. Philo's group is full of such friendships. And everyone in it has warm feelings for Philo himself. It wouldn't be any fun if you didn't love your master!"

The Palaestra

NOT FAR FROM the school was one of the Boys' Palaestras, which Kimon was most anxious Tom should see. Here the master was called a *pedotribe*; he wore a purple himation and was armed with a long forked stick which he did not hesitate to use when his charges misbehaved or made faulty movements. By this time Tom knew that the Greeks could be exceedingly tough, and so he was not surprised when the coach caught the neck of a boy who was wrestling clumsily and gave him a series of sharp prods. He told him to get a proper grip on his opponent; they wrestled standing up and breast to breast, with holds on the arms, shoulders and trunk. Three falls made a victory.

"We all come here for exercise every day, it's a most important part of our school-work," Kimon explained.

None of the boys wore any clothes, Tom saw, but some who had just come in stood rubbing their bodies with olive oil until they glistened, after which they sprinkled themselves with red or yellow dust. Since they spent so much time

in the sunlight they were nearly all a deep brown in colour, but the powder gave them a fiercer, more vivid look. Kimon and Tom stripped too, and then the Greek boy explained the various types of athletics, pointing out groups who were practising here and there.

"In foot-races we have the *stadion*, which is about 210 yards, although the track at Delphi is only 184. No, we don't use a kneeling start but we have a place to put our leading foot so that nobody cheats. And there's the *double stadion* where we run one way, turn and come back. And there are longer races, too—up to twenty-four laps, in fact. In the hoplites' race the men wear their armour. As for the chariot race, they have to run to their chariots and jump on."

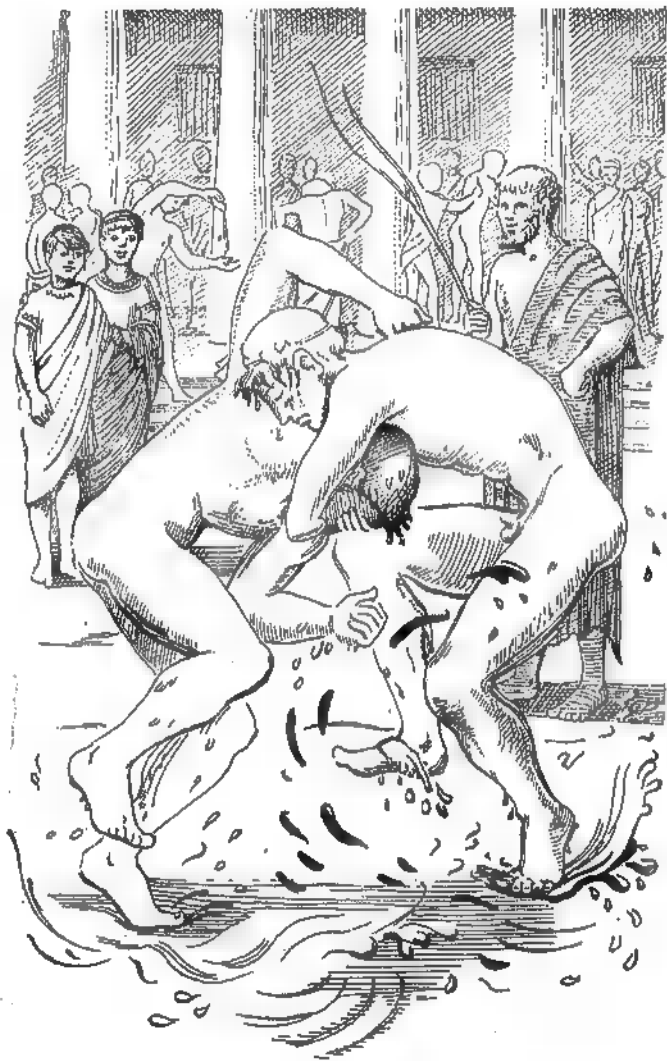
"Like our racing-drivers," Tom said.

In the sand of the court boys were practising the long jump, which they performed with knees up and feet kept together while holding a small stone or bronze dumb-bell in their hands. Kimon pointed out the various kinds of bronze discus, a three pound weight such as is used today and heavier ones of four and a half, six and nine pounds. He explained how the javelin was thrown. It should be as long as your body and finger-thick, unpointed but weighted at one end, and you launched it from a leather sling. The *pentathlon*, or five event competition, consisted of running, long-jumping, discus and javelin throwing, and wrestling; it was the finest

thing to win, which meant coming first in at least three activities. Then there was boxing. The boxers wore leather mittens but there was no ring and no rounds—which sounded pretty exhausting, Tom thought.

"Oh, look," Kimon said excitedly, "there's going to be a *pankration*. The slaves are watering the pit till the sand turns all muddy. It's that tough Nikias, who's been challenged by Krito. Krito's much lighter, but he's wiry and knows a lot of tricks. He's got *nous* as we say. And the other chap's a bully. The pedotribe doesn't let us do the *pankration* often because it's pretty dangerous."

All the boys crowded round the pit where the two boys stood. When the coach called "Start!" the heavy Nikias lunged at Krito and tried to land ■ great sweeping blow at his head, but Krito caught his wrist and making use of the bully's momentum succeeded in getting behind him where he secured a strangle-hold on the throat. Panting like a bull, Nikias tried to shake him off. Meanwhile Krito kicked at his opponent's calves and with his free hand clawed at his ear and pulled his hair. When this seemed to have no effect he tried a few punches in the region of the kidney. At last with ■ great effort, Nikias reared up and cracked the back of his head against the boy's face, after which, with ■ sudden violent duck, he managed to fling him over his shoulder and flat into the squelchy mud. With a roar he fell on him as he wriggled



“... really much worse than all-in wrestling ...”

like an eel. Soon, despite the oil and the dust, they were both covered with mud. Nikias had his knees on the boy's solar plexus and was jumping up and down to knock the breath from his body. Suddenly the position reversed. Krito rolled free and managed to thump Nikias' face into the slime. For a moment he was blinded. Krito let him half rise and then kicked him hard in the stomach, winding him completely. The boys cheered as the pedotribe declared the contest over.

Tom thought of the Greek mottoes, "Follow the Golden Mean" and "Do Nothing To Excess", and found it odd that they should at times indulge in such an unsporting "sport", which was really much worse than all-in wrestling. Apparently you could do everything except bite and gouge the eyes. On the other hand he supposed it was better to be violent in sport than in other ways. Even the terrible Spartans made it a point of honour to spare the cities they conquered.

Now Kimon and Tom had a couple of races together, which Kimon won, and they then wiped themselves down with a strigil and bathed in the deliciously cool fountain.

How Athens Became a Democracy

THIS EVENTFUL MORNING ended with our visitors meeting again and the whole party repairing to the Tholos, where Thrasylos was glad to answer their questions. Kimon had often told Tom and Jane that his father had doubts about the virtues of extreme democracy, where coppersmith and green-grocer had equal votes with landowner and knight, but Thrasylos was evidently an enthusiast for the present state of the polis.

"I expect you know," Thrasylos began, "that we Athenians were first ruled by kings but that the power of these kings was gradually limited by the election of ■ military commander, a *polemarch*, who was chosen from the nobles, and also by a regent or archon who belonged to the first family in the land, at that time the Medontids or descendants of Medon. By about two hundred and fifty years ago, however, the government had spread to the whole *aristocracy*—the best-born families, in fact—and they governed through ■ *polemarch*, an archon and

what was left, so to speak, of the king, all of them now elected annually. It was a comparatively feudal set-up, you see, which believed in the knightly virtues and that you acquired character and the gift of leadership only by birth. But then something not unexpected began to happen. Rich landowners bought their way into the ruling class until wealth became more important than blue blood. *Oligarchy* (rule of the few), or perhaps we should say *Timocracy* (rule of the rich), began to replace aristocracy. Now wealth usually loosens up a class structure. In those days people were divided into three levels of wealth: the *Pentacosiomedimni* (an awfully long word, I fear) whose income reached 500 measures of corn—or, later, of wine, oil and corn together; the *Hippias*, or Knights, who earned 300 measures; and the *Zeugitae*, or Teamsters, who were well-to-do peasants. At first it was just that a member of the first class became eligible to be archon, polemarch or king, even if not well-born. And also that the other classes had some hand in the appointment of a new group of six judges, who were later joined with the three principal magistrates to make nine of the ten archons we have today.

“At this stage the great Solon arrived on the scene. He found that the landowners were eating up the smallholders and peasants by seizing their lands for debt and enslaving their persons. He did two very important things.

First, he stopped the oppression by limiting the size of estates, restoring debtors' lands, prohibiting enslavement for debt and so on. Secondly, he promoted the prosperity of everyone by encouraging the export of olive oil and the establishment of industries—he promised citizenship to foreign craftsmen who settled here and he encouraged each father to teach his son a trade. All classes of citizen, including a fourth class of poor peasants, the *Thetes*, could now attend the Assembly and were—this is obviously important—eligible to serve as judges (*Heliasts*) of the new popular courts. Furthermore, alongside the Court of Aeropagos, which consisted of ex-magistrates and was very conservative, Solon instituted a Council of Four Hundred chosen from the four Ionian tribes into which our people had been divided since the earliest times. Only the *Thetes* were still excluded. Solon inclined to the belief that it was fairest to choose officials by lot, but was still rather worried as to whether the right people could be chosen that way. He therefore combined lot with election. The archons were picked by lot out of forty candidates elected by the tribes.

“Then came the rule of the tyrant, Peisistratos. Some say of him that at least he did not overthrow Solon's reforms and that he assisted the poor. When he died we might quite easily have sunk back into aristocratic rule. Fortunately Kleisthenes took the people's side. He saw that

our organisation by tribes benefited the aristocrats, who usually got nominated as archons by their own people since family and local loyalties were strong. He therefore did a very extraordinary thing. He abolished the four old tribes and created ten entirely new ones, each having a roughly equal number of demes (parishes) which were never to be side by side but were to be scattered all over the country, some on the coast, some in the plain, some in the mountains. This meant that Plain people couldn't gang up against Mountain people—and that the natural meeting-place was the city itself. At the same time the demes were useful for local affairs, and for the admission of people on to the Registry of Citizens, while the tribes served for military service, drama contests and so on, as well as for the elections of archons and councils.

"In keeping with the new tribes, Kleisthenes established our present Council of Five Hundred, fifty for each tribe, which almost entirely replaced the Aeropagos. He seems to have shared Solon's caution; the members were chosen by lot from elected candidates until some time later when lot became the rule throughout. The old office of polemarch was extended into a *strategos* for each of the ten tribes. Originally this *strategos* was no more than the general of the tribe's regiment of hoplites and squadron of cavalry, but soon the *strategoï* became as important as the archons. Remember, though, that

the sovereign people have the right to appoint *which* particular strategos shall command a particular campaign.

"Well," Thrasylos concluded, "that brings us more or less up to date. It was Ephialtes who abolished the last property-qualification for archons and who determined that they should be elected entirely by lot. He, too, finally reduced the powers of the Court of Aeropagos. Our Perikles was his lieutenant. Amongst the many things he has done is to see that both archons and citizens attending the Assembly are *paid* for their services. You get paid for being a Judge too . . ."

He saw that Jane wasn't paying much attention and that Tom wore a puzzled frown. Even Kimon was watching a lizard flicker across the wall. Phyllis and Demeas, being slaves, were used to showing respectful interest.

"I'm sorry to have given you such a lecture," Thrasylos said with a smile. "All you need remember is that, bit by bit, the people have acquired complete power. The archons, the strategoi, the prytany are all responsible to them. Today I am President of Athens. And if I do wrong I shall be brought to account."

"How often does the Assembly meet, sir?" Tom asked, suddenly waking up and not wanting to appear rude.

"It used to be once each prytany, ten times a year, but there's such a lot of business we may meet almost every week."

"And, uncle, you've got to be sure of the

day," Kimon chipped in. "Some days are inauspicious, aren't they? Zeus may be angry. In any case, it begins with a sacrifice of pigs and the tracing of the sacred circle with their blood."

"Of course, Kimon. Followed by a great curse against any who might wish to deceive the sovereign people. Only then can speakers step up to the Bema, claim the myrtle crown of discussion, and argue over the laws the Council has already drafted." Thrasylllos turned to Jane. "Have you any questions, my dear?"

"It seems funny that all the Athenians should be M.P.s. I mean . . . aren't some of them lazy or busy or out in the hills or something?"

"I'm afraid you're right. We send the police round the Agora with a rope marked with a red dye to drive them up to the Pnyx—the laggards get their cloaks stained! Nevertheless the attendances are sometimes small, mostly artisans and shopkeepers from the nearby quarters. But an *ostracism* brings them in all right."

"What's that?" Tom asked.

"In the Sixth Prytany of each year the Ecclesia is asked if there are any men they wish to exile because of wrong-doing or the assumption of too much power. If they say 'yes' a special assembly is called in the Agora, not the Pnyx. Wooden hoardings are erected with ten doors for the tribes. You cast your vote by scratching the name of the man you distrust on a broken bit of pottery and dropping it into an urn. Six

thousand votes will get a man exiled for ten years."

"It happened to the great Themistokles," Kimon added—"the man who built our fleet and destroyed the Persians at Salamis. He fled to Argos, and Corfu, and then to Asia and the Persians where he became Governor of the province of Magnesia."

"And to Aristides, who stayed behind on the field of Marathon to supervise the Persian spoil. He was so scrupulously honest he was nicknamed *The Just*. Yet the citizens sent him away!" It was a new voice in the Tholos, not loud, but everyone looked up. "Perhaps we Athenians are too suspicious of our leaders—we fear their *hubris* (ambitious pride). For that matter, the Spartan leader against Persia, Pausanias, also came to a bad end." There was sadness in the new arrival's tone.

For this was Perikles himself.

The Last Days

SHORTLY AFTER THIS Tom and Jane decided that they wanted to have a private talk together. So they slipped off to the famous Fountain of the Nine Spouts (Enneakrounos). Here slave girls gossiped to the splash of water, filling the jugs they carried so cleverly on their heads.

"I think we ought to go home soon," Tom began. "Our parents will be missing us."

"I know. I've been thinking the same thing. Except that . . ."

"Go on," Tom said, for Jane had paused, wrinkling her nose.

"Except that perhaps a Time Machine is the sort of magic that happens in a flash. You know—like a dream."

"I hate stories that turn out to have been dreams."

"I don't mean that this super visit *has* been a dream, only that to our parents we may have been away only a few hours, or even a few seconds."

The funny thing was that as soon as the idea of going home had been mentioned, the atmos-

phere around them changed. Sometimes it grew shadowy, as though they really were in a dream. Sometimes it became terrifically clear and bright. There was a touch of sadness to it, too, and a desire to catch everything before it disappeared.

They found themselves asking questions of each other in a desire to sum things up. What are the three most important things about the Athenians? was one of these questions. And the answer was usually that their hosts were *artistic*, because they loved all sorts of beauty so much, *political*, in view of the amount of time they spent discussing the affairs of the city, and more generally *interested in human beings*, as shown by their love of heroes, and their making their gods like men, as well as by that intense curiosity of theirs which extended from a fondness for gossip to the inquiries of philosophers and scientists into the good life, the workings of the human body or the composition of matter.

The children turned also to what they doubted or disliked in the Athenians, and came up with various answers at different times. Jane thought their gods were silly and badly behaved, to which Tom added that the more intelligent men had obviously outgrown them and were now seeking for a single spiritual power or for a code of conduct based upon science and common sense. The children thought the Greeks could be cruel, and that their use of slavery and treatment of women were to be deplored, but they had to

admit these criticisms applied equally to Englishmen up to the abolition of negro slavery, judicial torture and hanging for small offences. A graver objection was, perhaps, the lack of Greek unity and settled peace, except for the sacred places of Delphi and Olympia, and the number of leading men who were rightly or wrongly accused of being traitors. For that matter, was Perikles right in making Athens the head of an empire and compelling the subject peoples to pay tribute? An excuse often offered was that, whenever he had to interfere in the affairs of a troublesome state, he naturally saw that its government became a democracy.

Yet what enchantments rose all about Tom and Jane! Walking in the Karameikos and elsewhere they came upon many of the beautiful *steles* with which sculptors decorated the tombs of the dead. These were oblong slabs of marble, often surrounded by a decorated frame, on which the figures stood out in bold relief. One they could never forget commemorated a dead youth. His head and body occupied the whole right side of the panel, the cloak caught up in thick folds over his left shoulder but exposing most of his trunk in an oval swirl. His left hand, which hung down by his thigh, grasped the little bird that must have been his favourite pet, while his right arm and hand stretched out in a gesture of farewell. A carved lion, a bird-cage with painted bars and a small naked slave-boy, looking very lonely and miserable, com-

pleted the marble picture whose gentle softness suggested that it was carved by an Ionian craftsman. In other *steles* Tom and Jane saw two young warriors walking together to the Land of the Dead or, which was more usual, the dead person and his mourner facing each other; a wife and husband gravely shook hands, or an old father leaned on his staff and plucked his beard as he stared intently on the face of his son, sculpted in ideal nakedness and accompanied by a hound and a weeping boy.

It was then that Tom remembered the sadness of Greek poets when they spoke of death:



"... a wife and husband gravely shook hands"

Man's life is a day. What is he?
What is he not? A shadow in a dream
Is man, but when God sheds a brightness,
Shining light is on earth,
And life is sweet as honey.

These words of Pindar were gentler than some.

Behold this wretched man's corpse scattered
on the shore, cast from sea-raging rocks.
There lies head reft of hair and robbed of
teeth. And five nails there growing on a hand,
and fleshless ribs, two soles of unsinewed
feet and his limbs' unloosed anatomy. Alas,
the happiest ones never left their mother's
pangs to view the sun!

(Philip of Salonika).

Returning from one of these walks, the
children entered an olive grove to see ■ short
squat figure motionless before them. The olives
were a silver mist against the blue sky, their
trunks terribly gnarled and twisted, their shade
sparse on the earth. But the figure did not stand
in the shade but in a clearing in the full sun.

"Heavens! it's Sokrates," Tom gasped. "I've
been longing to talk to him."

However as they approached, and passed quite
close, there was no sign from the motionless
figure. They saw that his cheeks were puckered in
concentration and his eyes almost closed. Sweat
ran down into his beard. Even more extraordi-
nary, a small green lizard lay basking on his

sandal. He must have been there for hours, just thinking.

One day they visited Kimon's country farm and were introduced to his ferrets, which the Greeks often loved as much as we do cats. The wine harvest had begun. They watched the grapes being trodden under the bare feet of the labourers to the sound of a flute. The men were catching and frying female cicadas, but these the children refused to eat, preferring to watch a pet one in ■ little cage of woven grasses. There was a poem about this too:

No longer rolling in the cool tree-shadows
can I send forth a happy sound from my
quick-sounding wings; for I have fallen into
the cruel hands of a boy, who seized me
secretly, as I sat under the green leaves.

A grizzled old slave showed them a snake he had killed, telling them that snakes were born out of the spinal cords of dead people, which they thought a very quaint notion. And towards evening Kimon organised a cock-fight, at which Jane couldn't stop herself blurting out that such sports were illegal in Britain.

Another big occasion was when Onesimos escorted the whole family to the theatre. During the Festivals the first play began at sunrise but this was ■ different kind of performance and took place in the afternoon. Tom, who had vague memories of having seen photographs of Greek theatres at school, such as the great one at

Epidauros where the healer Asklepios had his shrine and hospital, was surprised to find the Dionysos Theatre still so simple. In 534 B.C., so far as we can tell, the auditorium, which was to seat between fourteen thousand and seventeen thousand spectators, consisted only of rough terraces cut out of the hillside of the Akropolis; the circular dancing place or *orchestra*, with an altar in its middle, may have been paved by then but even the people in the front row, such as Onesimos and his fellow archons and their guests, could not hope for more than wooden chairs. Beyond the orchestra there was a wooden scene-house (*skene*) which represented



■ classical façade with three doors and which was flanked by two projecting portions, *para-skeneia*, which may have contained stairs to an upper storey. Behind stood the temple of Dionysos himself.

When Tom and Jane got back to England they were to look up what the archæologists had to say about all this, and to find how many theatres were in fact superimposed one on another during Hellenistic and Roman times. But even then they found several questions still undecided. When was a stage introduced?

How high was it? Did it change its height? And so on. But it seemed clear that some scene-painting and some "machinery" for the entrance of gods from the sky, or the ascent of Medea in her chariot, were used by the middle of the fifth century, while the fact that the earliest plays of Aeschylus take place in the countryside suggests that originally there was no *skene* but only a drop from the banked-up rear of the "stage" to the hill below. Indeed, Kimon told them that some plays had taken place in the Agora but that the collapse of the wooden seating there had led to their removal to the hillside.

"We need much space," Onesimos explained, "because our plays are not just entertainments but religious ceremonies; our theatre is a kind of temple, and all the citizens have the right to come, the women included. Besides we Athenians are proud of our dramatic poets, Aeschylus, Sophokles and Euripides. You see, the epic and lyric poets were not generally Athenian. Homer came from Ionia, Sappho from Lesbos, Hesiod and Pindar from Boetia, Simonides from Keos. And then suddenly our playwrights burst upon the scene. You are going to see the *Antigone* of Sophokles, which was first performed six years ago—that same Sophokles who as a boy of twenty defeated the great Aeschylus and drove him to Sicily for some years" (in 468 B.C.).

Tom and Jane were surprised to find that part of the play consisted of the chanting and dancing of a chorus of fifteen men on the

orchestra, who spoke beautiful lyric verse about the story and characters, offering advice, wailing lamentation and making statements about Man's life and fate, all to a musical accompaniment. And then the actors! They wore a big boot with ■ wooden sole (called the *kothurnos*), a tall head-dress (the *onkos*) and were padded proportionally as well as wearing a mask. Some of them were well over seven feet tall, for the more important you were the taller and stouter you had to look.

And yet the play was full of tenderness. The problem it dealt with was a tenderly human one; the cold decrees of a new law-giver against ■ girl's natural love and respect for her brothers. It concerned Thebes, the unhappy city of Oedipos, now dead. His brother-in-law, Kreon, has declared that of his niece Antigone's two brothers, both killed by the other's hand, the body of the treacherous Polyneikes, who came back from exile at the head of an army, must be left dishonourably unburied, a prey to the dogs and birds. This seemed to Tom and Jane a harsh decree but not unreasonable; what they had learned of ostracism, and exposure at birth, seemed to fit in with it. Kreon did not appear to be an unfeeling tyrant, although opposition to his wishes made him take up a more and more extreme position. But they soon learned how Sophokles supported the other side—the side, that is, of the girl Antigone who believed in the older law of the blood-tie and of natural decency. Bravely she determines to

bury her brother's body. When she is caught, she defies the king, who sends her into prison to await his pleasure. At this point her fiancé, Haemon the son of Kreon, tries to intercede with his father. Kreon's argument is based on logic: a king must rule—and the protests of women, mere boys like his son, or the people themselves cannot avail against his orders.

Kreon: Am I to rule this land after some rule
Other than mine?

Haemon: A city is no city
That is of one man only.

Kreon: Is not the city
Held to be his who rules it?

Haemon: That were splendid!
You the sole monarch of an empty land!

In the end father and son quarrel bitterly, Haemon rushes off, Kreon orders Antigônê to be walled up in a cave until she dies. Only the fearful prophesy of Tireisias brings Kreon to his senses. But by this time it is too late for the repentant king to save the situation. Antigônê has hanged herself, Haemon falls on his sword at the sight and Kreon's wife, too, has died. The final chorus asserts heavenly law against man's proud decrees:

Heaven's insistence
Nothing allows of man's irreverence;
And great blows great speeches avenging,
Dealt on a boaster,
Teach men wisdom in age, at last.

Tom and Jane came out of the theatre somewhat dazed with all this, and, since Onesimos and the others were busily talking to friends, besides which the sun had been very hot, the two young people slipped into the shade of an olive that grew out of a big rock.

Someone else had had the same idea. It was, to their astonishment, Sokrates. That soon to be famous round face with its snub nose, rather bulging eyes and mischievous smile was turned towards them.

"I know that you are the children from the North," he chuckled, "and I rather think I should sit at your feet and let you be my teachers,



"It was Sokrates . . ."

because your heads are full of greater wonders than mine."

"Oh, but you are the wise man, sir," Tom said. "Lots of people have told us that."

"I suppose I am not entirely unintelligent—for a man of my own time, that is. At least I enjoy finding out the truth about things, I think. But I know very little. I have heard that, although you are both very tactful and well-behaved, you have sometimes let slip pieces of extraordinary knowledge about the future." He frowned, and then his eyes twinkled again. "However, I have this funny and sometimes rather irritating Voice inside me, which often tells me not to do things I think I should like, and I'm afraid it absolutely forbids me to question you about all that. Isn't it tiresome? So I'll ask you ■ perfectly proper question. How do you like Athens?"

"I think it's wonderful," Jane said. "We've met your great leader, Perikles, and we've been to the Tholos and heard all about the government." She felt such matters were of sufficient importance and dignity to mention to ■ great man.

"So you have seen Perikles?" Sokrates scratched his head. "Ah, well, he's quite ■ person, isn't he? And you called him I think, a *great leader*, did you not? I suppose you would use this word *great* to describe a severe storm or a plague of sickness or even somebody very stupid? You might call a friend a *great idiot*?"

"We might," said Tom.

"So the word *great* does not by itself mean that a thing is virtuous or beneficial, but only that it is extreme?"

"Yes."

"In which case it must all depend on the other word, the word *leader*. But here, it seems, we come upon another difficulty. There was once a ram who led the whole of his flock over a precipice into the sea. Was he a *leader*?"

"In ■ way—I suppose yes."

"And since all the flock followed him without exception he must have been a *great leader*, since it is surely harder to lead animals into danger than into safety, and he was thus a leader in an extreme way."

"He wasn't leading them in the right direction," Tom smiled, beginning to enjoy the game.

"Ah, so leadership depends on *where* one leads one's flock?"

"Of course."

Sokrates slapped Tom on the back. "And that is precisely why I am suspicious of Perikles." He paused and wrinkled his nose. "No, my children, I should prefer to be like Antigônê and listen to what my heart and the gods told me."

"My friend Kimon," Tom couldn't help exclaiming, "told me you didn't believe in the gods."

"Perhaps there are gods . . . and gods. If people turn their gods into men, then perhaps they are not preferable to men themselves, and may even be less so, since copies are not as

good as the things copied. But if gods are better than men, obviously one must love them even more than one loves one's friends. Instead of these gods being our shadows, we shall then be the shadows of gods. For, indeed, I think we have something godlike in us. An athlete's body, a soldier's brave heart, a keen and clear mind—are not these precious things?"

Sokrates looked at them with a kind of passionate laughter in his eyes. Then Kimon stood before them, and Persephone. There were people going by, shouting, and a sort of trembling of the air, and in a moment—for the time had come upon them—they found themselves saying farewell. The Akropolis floated beneath, the Parthenon golden in the setting sun, and there was Sokrates looking up, and Onesimos with a raised hand, and Kimon calling something that grew very faint, and then the mountains and the sea.

It was all over.

So it was that Tom and Jane left Athens before the sad days of the war with Sparta, during which Perikles died and Alkibiades played such a strange and changeable part, before the trial and death of Sokrates, and the period when Athens, still rich in philosophers and artists, was a dependent of Sparta, and Thebes, and then of the great Alexander of Macedon, and finally of the Romans, until the intellectual leadership of the Greeks moved first to Alexandria and afterwards to Christian Byzantium.

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